Journey into Compassion
A Study Series
Session IV

Chapters 4, 5 and 6

Theme: Compassionate life is a life together.

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<tr>
<th>Assemble</th>
<th>Participants handouts placed on seats</th>
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<tr>
<td>Flip chart and markers</td>
<td>Worship page</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name tags</td>
<td>Homework assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empty Basket</td>
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<td>Stones from Session II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chime (Singing Bowl or Bell)</td>
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<td>Candle, placed on center table</td>
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<td>Bible, placed on center table</td>
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<td>(readings marked)</td>
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<td>Cross, placed on center table</td>
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<td>Computer for playing music</td>
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<table>
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<th>Agenda Item</th>
<th>Opening</th>
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<td>Opening Worship</td>
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<td>Opening Sharing and follow-up</td>
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Gathering Time

Before session begins make reading assignments.

Play appropriate music for gathering.

Light the candle, take your seat and ring the chime, after a moment turn down the music.

Opening Worship

Facilitator: Let us say together.......  

All: We are gathered “in the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

Facilitator: Gathered here in Christ’s name creating a community of trust, we are aware of the overwhelming needs of the world outside our circle. We must each venture out, away from our circle, leaving our comfortable place of love and protection. In our displacement, we are strengthened by our knowledge of the love and support of our community. As one Facilitator reads, the other brings in an empty basket and places it on the table.

Facilitator: As the empty basket is brought to the table we understand that we ourselves are containers, we are containers of hope.

All: We are not empty containers. We have the potential of holding love and support.

Facilitator: I invite you one at a time to place the object you brought representing community, displacement or togetherness in the basket. Saying the one word that it invokes: **community**, **displacement** or **togetherness**.

Reader 1 Philippians 2:1-8

Play the chanting of Psalm 84. This can be found in Session IV resources or you can use this link [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CykvPkk84lE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CykvPkk84lE)

or read Psalm 139
Opening **Sharing**

**Sharing 1**  Welcome group and invite participants to share their experience doing the assignment from last week and discuss. *(briefly)*

**Sharing 2**  Repeat group sharing asking participants to respond to the incomplete sentences regarding their reading for the week. *(one minute or less per person)*

**Discussion**

Use the issues raised during the sharing to facilitate the discussion or if necessary choose from the following questions.

**Community – Chapter Four**
- How did the author define community?
- How would you describe your community?
- What in your world (frame of reference) mitigates against community? Are there ways you/we can overcome those obstacles?

**Displacement – Chapter Five**
- Do you see a connection between Intentional Displacement and surrender? If so what is that connection. Can you say something about the examples the authors give in this chapter.

**Togetherness – Chapter Six**
- Have you ever experienced what the author describes as compassionate togetherness?
  Share that experience.

**Soul Exercise**

Invite each member of the group to share a struggle, hurt or ongoing concern in their lives. *(No one has to share.) After one person shares, have a time of prayer and laying on of hands by others members of the group. *(Be sure to ask permission to touch the the member who has just shared)* Continue until all have had an opportunity to share. Depending on the size of the group you may want to break into smaller groups so that all who want to share have the opportunity to do so. **Rationale for this activity:** This is the fourth session and by this time folks might be willing to share more deeply. Others have the opportunity to experience listening to this sharing and then physically touching and praying over each person. When we confess to God, we know we are forgiven by God. It is only when we confess to another human being that we are liberated.
Conclusion

- Questions and answers
- Read Chapters 7 and 8 for next week.
- Homework assignment
  A definition of intentional displacement is “To go someplace or participate in some activity that challenges you to move or shift from your ordinary or proper place.” Allow yourself to be open to experiencing something new that stretches you to consider how others experience the world.

Discuss assignment and examples of intentional displacement. Note that this is the most time consuming assignment. Participants will receive the greatest benefit if the assignment is completed early in the week allowing for adequate reflection.

Additional Activity for those who want to try something new (displacement).

Expose yourself to the basics of Haiku poetry. (see http://www.squidoo.com/how-to-write-a-haiku-poem)
Write a simple three line verse around a subject related to community, displacement or togetherness. Be ready to share with the others.

Sending Prayer:

**Facilitator:** Lord, help us to remember that others don't always see the way we do, hear what we hear, feel what we feel, or understand things the way we've come to understand them. You give each of us gifts that are uniquely ours but so often we fail to value the gift in another, judging other gifts as wrong or somehow less important than our own. Give us the compassion you want us to have, O Father, and teach us to embrace each other with compassionate arms, no matter what our age, color, creed, history, or belief. Help us to remember that you are Life Itself, and that you are using every one of our unique gifts to bring us together with you once again. (http://www.revisionsplus.com/compassion.html)

**Facilitator:** Even as our circle breaks we continue to experience community as we leave for our separate lives, giving us strength and courage to open our lives to others. I invite each of you in turn to select one of the objects from the bowl and ask the person who brought the item to say a word or two about what it represents to him/her. Then carry the object with you throughout the week as a means of remembering both the community of this group and the person to whom the object belonged.

**Facilitator:** Let us offer our concerns and encouragements to each other, as we leave this space to continue our journey...

**All:**

*Lord, make us instruments of your peace.*
*Where there is hatred, let us sow love;*
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is discord, union;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Facilitator: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord with compassion.
Let us share the peace as we prepare to continue our journey.

Everyone shares God’s Peace

Note to Facilitator: Before next weeks session mark each of the stones that were placed on
the worship table during session II with a cross using a marker or paint or engrave a cross
using a Dremel tool.