

## THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO COMMUNITY

### WHAT WOULD A COMMUNITY LOOK LIKE IF JESUS WERE IN CHARGE?

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' <sup>22</sup> Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup> Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup> As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. <sup>26</sup> At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' <sup>27</sup> The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. <sup>28</sup> But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. <sup>29</sup> His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' <sup>30</sup> But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. <sup>32</sup> Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. <sup>35</sup> This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart." *Matthew 18:21-35*

#### THE BIG QUESTION

#### HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO SOMEONE WHO SINS AGAINST ME?

#### THE RADICAL ANSWER

*Forgive them 490 times.*

*Why so generous? ... the Kingdom of Heaven is like ... (18:23-34)*

**A FRIGHTENING REALITY:** *If we don't forgive, we won't receive forgiveness.*

#### FORGIVENESS IS:

- *NOT enabling abuse or denying the reality of hurt and pain.*
- *acknowledging hurt and willfully absorbing the debt in such a way which allows the wrongdoer the opportunity to repent and be restored.*

#### NEXT STEPS

*Is there someone you need to forgive? Whom? How? For what?*

*What step do you need to take right now to forgive this person?*

*Is there someone from whom you need to ask forgiveness? **SEEK** him/her right now, acknowledge your wrongdoing and ask for forgiveness.*

*Do you need to accept God's forgiveness? **PARTICIPATE** in communion today as a sign of receiving God's mercy and forgiveness.*

#### **Suggested Resources**

*The New Friars* by Scott Bessenecker

*Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer

*The Cost of Community: Jesus, St. Francis and Life in the Kingdom* by Jamie Arpin-Ricci

*The Dangerous Act of Loving Your Neighbor: Seeing Others Through the Eyes of Jesus* by Mark Labberton

July 27/28, 2013

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