

AGAINST THE FLOW

Life Group Discussions – w/c 10th March 2024

The beatitudes set forth the balanced and multifaceted character of Christians. These are not eight separate and distinct groups of disciples, some of whom are meek, while others are merciful and yet others are called to endure persecution. They are rather eight qualities of the same group, who at one and the same time are meek and merciful, poor in spirit and pure in heart.

Further, the group exhibiting these marks is not an elitist set, a small spiritual aristocracy remote from common Christians. On the contrary, the beatitudes are Christ's own specification of what every Christian ought to be. All of these qualities are to characterize all his followers. They describe his ideal for us as citizens of God's Kingdom.

1. Why do you think the beatitudes have such universal appeal?
2. **READ** Matthew 5:1-12.
3. How would you define *mercy* (Matthew 5:7)?
4. What opportunities has God given you to show mercy to those in need?
5. Why is it fitting that "the peacemakers" will be called sons of God (Matthew 5:9)?

6. How can we be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9) in our homes, in our churches and in society?
7. How is being a peacemaker different from settling for "peace at any price"?
8. In spite of our efforts at peace-making, what does Jesus say we will experience (Matthew 5:10-12)? Why should this cause us to rejoice?
9. Why would the world hate the kind of people described in the beatitudes?
10. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was killed by the Nazis because of his faith, wrote: "*With every beatitude the gulf is widened between the disciples and the people.*" How have the beatitudes challenged you to be different?