

SHOULD HAPPENS

WEEK 2 DISCUSSION GUIDE

"I SHOULD ON OTHERS"

READ

This week we continued our "Should Happens" series based on the book written by Todd Clark. We talked about the shoulds that weigh us down and destroy relationships. Shoulds are expectations we place on ourselves, others, and God. To help us better understand the shoulds we place on others we looked at job descriptions.

Job descriptions help create clarity for what we do at work. Unfortunately, we tend to carry this into our relationships by making job descriptions for the people in our lives. We keep secret lists of what others should and should not do and make them feel guilty when they don't meet our expectations. We looked at an example of this in the gospel of Luke.

Luke 10:38-40

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

Martha and Mary were good friends of Jesus, and when he came to town they invited him over. They were excited to see him but had very different ideas of what to do. Martha put should expectations on Mary. She had a job description for her that Mary was not meeting. It is easy to see in this story but more difficult to see in our own lives.

We have secret expectations of others, and when they fail to meet them we get angry. These secret expectations are mostly meant to serve us. When we put should expectations on others we are trying to take God's place in their lives.

In Jeremiah 29:11 God reassured people whose lives were in chaos that he was leading them somewhere good. "For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future".

When we put should expectations on others, we tell them that we have plans for them. More often than not our plans for them are not the same as God's plans. This was the case in the story of Martha and Mary.

Luke 10:41-42

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

Martha thought she knew what was best for Mary, but she didn't. We think we know what is best for others and often this comes from a good place. Many of the shoulds we put on others are not bad, but in fact good, the problem is when we tell others what they should be doing it creates guilt. Guilt is a terrible motivator and relationship destroyer. So many of us have relationships that are in shambles because we have spent years putting should expectations on others. We need to put that aside and value the people around us whether they meet our should expectations or not.

Let us stop trying to play God in other people's lives and trust that he knows better than we do. God has plans for other people that proceeded your plans and are better than your plans. The people in your life have worth not because of what they do or who they should be, but because of who they are. Children of God, made in the image of God. We are defined by this, not by other people's expectations.

We looked at a framework to help us think about this. Resource versus relationship. Resources are things you manage, relationships are meant to enjoy. You own resources, you experience relationships. Stop treating people like resources and enjoy your relationships.

DISCUSS

Think about the story of Martha and Mary, have you ever experienced a similar situation? Share this with your group.

What are some should expectations that you put on others?

Reflect on a time when should expectations caused difficulties in a relationship. Share this with your group.

Have you ever felt less than because you did not meet someone else's should expectations of you? How did this affect your relationship?

The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to a church in Philippi, which included some thoughts on how to treat each other. *"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves"*.

What do you think it looks like to value others above yourselves?

Brainstorm with your group ways you can put this into practice, to value others above yourselves.

PRAY FOR YOUR GROUP

Pray that we would trust God with the people in our lives, that we would put aside our should expectations and enjoy the relationships we are in.

PRAY FOR FCC

Pray that we would value others above ourselves; and that this would be revealed in how we love others as Christ loves us.

PRAY FOR OUR GLOBAL PARTNERS

Pray for our ministry partners as they begin a new year loving others, educating and sharing the love of Jesus. Pray for funding for all areas of need. Pray for health, healing and strength to be restored for leaders. Pray for churches to be planted and more children to be sponsored to help break the poverty cycle.