

# LIFE GROUP GUIDE

## RACE DIVISION INEQUALITY

### INTRODUCTION

What is it like living in South Africa? Depending on who you ask, you are going to get dramatically different answers.

Division and inequality along ethnic lines seems to pervade every sphere of our society. Many times we may feel overwhelmed and hopeless by them, casting dark shadows of hopelessness into our shared future in South Africa. Or we may try to downplay the realities, minimizing the lived experiences and shutting our ears to brothers and sisters.

How are Christ-followers to engage with these big issues? How are we to understand the visible issues of racial tension and the invisible realities of our heart condition?

We hope this Discussion Guide will bring new insights and tools for you to engage with this topic and hear what the Bible has to say about this issue as well.

**Prior to the meeting, please have participants read [this article](#).**

This will be a good foundation for discussion and set the stage for the first video.

## SESSION ONE

### RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- Refer to article [God, the Bible and Diversity](#) (pre-reading)
- Computer with internet for watching a video



#### OPEN IN PRAYER

Pray for this time – that God would open your eyes and hearts to a new revelation, a new perspective, or a next step you can take on your own personal journey of justice.



#### ACTIVITY ONE

Watch [this TED Talk](#) (19:16 min)

Novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie delivered a powerful TED talk in 2009. She raised the crucial issue that we can have pictures, stories and ideas about people groups and cultures that are too narrow, too restrictive and limiting.

We can live lives with these stories in our minds, shaping the way we see and interact with people from these groups and cultures. Watch this video and use the below questions to apply into your life.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are the 'single stories' you have about different ethnic groups in South Africa?
- What are the 'single stories' you have about people from different socio-economic classes in South Africa?
- How can you have more than a single story? How can you expand the number of stories about a people, culture or place?
- Who can you be listening to in order expand these stories?



## ACTIVITY TWO

Prior to the meeting, participants should have read [this article](#), entitled God, the Bible and Diversity.

- What do you think is an action step toward "stand side by side with other believers for the faith of the gospel." (Phil 1:27) Where do you see the need for Believers to stand with victims of injustice in Cape Town?
- What do you think about this statement, "Being non-racist is insufficient. God would have his followers be ethnicity and culture affirming. This goes beyond tolerance or neutrality. In revealing Peter's ethnic intolerance, God did not call him to tolerate Cornelius (a Gentile), but to embrace him (Acts 10)."
- What "PRINCIPLE OF GROWTH AND SANCTIFICATION" are you ready to implement?



## LAST IMPRESSION FEEDBACK

Take one last round of feedback from the group. Ask them to give you a one or two sentence answer to one of these questions:

- What are you leaving tonight thinking/feeling?
- What does this mean for you/your family?
- What are your questions to research or next steps to take?



## CLOSE IN PRAYER

Pray as a group for the thoughts and feelings that have been stirred as you've studied God's Word

## CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION...

If your group enjoyed this topic, consider having this conversation carry on for another week- prep work for the second session is listed next.

If you decide to conclude this discussion now, please refer your group to the Common Good resource page for more reading and interacting with this topic and more!

[commongood.org.za/resources](http://commongood.org.za/resources)

## HOMWORK FOR SESSION TWO

Read articles:

- [Race & Power By Isiphambano Centre for Biblical Justice](#)
- [Why are we still Apart{heid}](#)

## SESSION TWO

### INTRODUCTION

After one week of looking into the topic of Race, Division and Inequality, let's dive in a bit deeper. Note, after some reflection and the homework reading, be aware of the tone of the room, any emotions that are rising and continue to refer to scripture and Jesus' instruction/response about this justice topic.

### RESOURCES NEEDED FOR THIS SESSION

- Refer to articles from homework [Race & Power](#) and [Why are we still Apart{heid}](#)



### OPEN IN PRAYER

Pray for this time – that God would bring to mind ways we can be aware of His heart for justice in this city. Pray for openness to see things the way God wants us to see them – for our hearts to be broken for what breaks His.



### ACTIVITY

Discussion about the preparatory readings.

- [Race & Power](#)
- [Why are we still Apart{heid}](#)

The questions below are in-depth and each could be a whole Life Group discussion on its own. Pick one or two questions below that you think could be addressed and good for your group. Unpack the question, try to draw out thinking or discussion that could stretch the group and inspire a deeper meaning to our views on Race, Division and Inequality.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### FROM THE ARTICLE RACE & POWER

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS STATEMENT?

Penny Sparrow's 2016 comments about beaches in Cape Town on New Year's Day were astonishing. Many of us may relate to the statement ...

*"I am not like Penny Sparrow therefore I cannot be racist. I don't wave the old South African flag therefore I cannot be racist. Some of my best friends are black therefore I cannot be racist. I pay my worker a living wage therefore I cannot be racist. I am married to a black person therefore I cannot be racist. I have adopted transracially therefore I cannot be racist."*

However,

*"When we make racism synonymous with the likes of Penny Sparrow we individualise racism and subsequently fail to acknowledge that racism, at its heart, is essentially a system of power and privilege designed to benefit some at the expense of others. Though we ourselves may not hold such overt and explicitly racist views we may still benefit from these systems of power and privilege."*

(from Race & Power article)

- What are your thoughts about this dynamic of 'levels of racism' versus any bit of racism in our hearts condemns us to the title of racist.
- In the section, "Race is a Social Construct" we're reminded that racism (especially in Cape Town) was crafted intentionally. Where do you see racism still happening in our city? And what can be done about it – corporately or individually?

#### WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS STATEMENT?

*"We must deal with our individual racism but that is not enough. Our best friends can be black, we can even marry or adopt across the "race line", we can pay our workers living wages, we can engage in all kinds of charitable works to assist the victims of racism but until we begin to see, acknowledge and actively work to dismantle the systems of privilege and power which benefit some of us at the expense of others we will never effectively get to the heart of dealing with racism. Racism is primarily about power not about skin colour."*

'Isn't Apartheid over?' is another key point in the article Race & Power.

- What are some of the hidden effects or lasting segregation in our city that are obvious to you?
- What are things that you've recently been reminded of (through this discussion or readings) that you have not been aware of or reflective about?

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### CONSIDERING THE ARTICLE, WHY ARE WE STILL APART{HEID}

Relook at these questions for reflection and action we can take personally to grow our awareness and challenge ourselves to bridge the division?  
Here are some ways to look, listen and gain a deeper awareness of what's going on in our city. But don't stop there. If you're moved by what you see and hear, challenge yourself to act!

#### LOOK

- What's your daily routine? Is your life diverse? Look at who you interact with and what meaningful relationships you invest in.
- Take note of your travel routes. What are you seeing? Who's driving, who's walking? **What types of homes, public service vehicles, shared spaces do you notice?** Are there vast differences in the places you pass on your route?
- Who do you interact with socially? Is there diversity in your friendships, where you shop, who gets invited to your get-togethers?
- Have you educated yourself about the stats of South African communities? Read these stats with a justice lens. What is unjust? What 'should not be'?
- Observe your budget in light of these stats. What percentage of South Africa is in your economic bracket? Have you ever thought about your finances as a justice issue?

#### LISTEN

- Read scripture with a fresh set of eyes to see God's heart for justice. **What does God say about doing justice?** How do you hear those commands and do they translate to your life well?
- What conversations do you hear on a daily basis? Ask questions, seek to understand another's story, listen to different perspectives.
- Walk the aisle of the grocery store and count how many languages you hear. **Does everyone sound or look just like you?**
- Ask someone you don't know well how they celebrate special occasions (birthdays, Christmas, public holidays)? Listen for unique cultural insights or what they put value on when celebrating (people, food, the place).
- What media do you consume? Do the people you watch on tv all look just like you? Do those who you listen to mostly support your own beliefs? **Listen with a justice lens.**
- Engage with current issues. Listen to the stories of social, economic and political issues.
- **When there are protests in different communities, seek to hear both sides of the story.**

## CHALLENGE YOURSELF

- Pinpoint a community you'd like to know better. Shop in a store near that place. Greet people in the aisles. Talk to the cashiers or car-guards. Look at the products for sale that might not be in the store nearest to you. Become a 'regular' and build relationships with that community.
- Read a local newspaper and highlight any articles related to poverty or injustice.
- Listen to a talk radio station you don't normally listen to. Note the topics you don't normally hear or aren't aware of.
- Take a different mode of transport. Use your senses to understand those who use this route. What do you see, hear, smell, feel? What are the positives and negatives about the transport in our city?
- Share a meal with someone different than you. Open your home or invite someone to your lunch table at work. Share stories. Listen, listen, listen. Listen until you know the other person feels heard.

## CONTINUING THE JOURNEY ...

If you still want to know more about how you can get involved or learn more about the topic, check out more Common Good Resources in the [Race, Division and Inequality page](#) as well as the [Lifestyle of Justice](#) page. Our friends at Isiphambano, Centre for Biblical Justice, are also a great resource to dive into on their site [here](#).