

Unabashedly
Episcopalian

A STUDY GUIDE

for Bishop Andy Doyle's Book



by the Rev. David Ottsen

FORWARD

The questions raised through this study guide are meant to be as comprehensive as possible.

That is, not simply questions which may be only addressed intellectually, but spiritually and from the heart. The questions will connect those using the Guide to the *Bible*, the *Book of Common Prayer* and the *Hymnal 1982*. The questions also seek to bring into the arena the group faith-experiences of individual participants. Thus, it will be important for the facilitator to provide an environment of care and love. Also, it will be important for members of the group to maintain an environment of confidentiality in the group.

STUDY GUIDE

Throughout the guide, as there are more questions offered than a group may have time to discuss, asterisks denote questions this author believes would be the primary questions to discuss.

CHAPTER ONE: WE ARE EPISCOPALIAN

1. Read I Corinthians 12:12-27. Relate to the quote from Martin Luther King, Jr.

*2. In the General Thanksgiving in the Daily Office in the BCP, we pray:

“...that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service...”

How does that connect to the Bishop’s statement (p. 4) that Episcopalians “make God’s love incarnational”? In what ways do you personally find this to be true? In what ways do you see this in your church? Do others see those in you? in your church?

3. What do you treasure about the Episcopal Church? about your own church?

4. The prayer the Bishop cites at the end of the chapter is our prayer of thanksgiving we pray at the end of communion in Rite II (p. 365). What does this prayer mean to you?

CHAPTER TWO: CHOOSING TO WALK THE PILGRIM'S WAY

*1. Bishop Doyle contrasts 5 beliefs common in our culture today with beliefs held by those of faith (pp. 10-14). What do you make of his contrasts? How would you contrast the beliefs from the culture and the beliefs of the church?

2. How do you define "church"? What do you see as the chief components of the church?

3. Read the last two sentences on p. 14, then respond to the questions the Bishop raises at the top of page 15.

*4. What stands out to you in each of the following:

A. The baptismal vows (p. 16)?

B. The Apostles' Creed (pp. 16-17)?

C. The questions in the Baptismal Covenant (pp. 17-18)?

5. Respond to the Bishop's questions at the top of page 19.

CHAPTER THREE: TELLING THE ONE, TRUE STORY

*1. Recall the first time/experience you can remember when you knew/realized you were beloved of God? (p. 23)

2. Recall a circumstance/situation where you knew God was bearing you in His strength. (p. 25)

3. In the hymn, "I sing a song of the saints of God":

A. What phrase connects with you the most?

B. How do you see yourself in the hymn?

*4. How have you experienced God's mercy? (p. 27)

CHAPTER FOUR: THE GOSPEL FIRE

- *1. Read and then respond to Bishop Doyle's description of the fire of Jesus (top of p. 31).
2. (p. 33, top paragraph, sentence beginning: "Claiming his story....") Respond to this statement.
- *3. What does living into the fire of Jesus mean to you?

CHAPTER FIVE: STEPS UP THE MOUNTAIN PATH

1. Tell of one of the saints of your life and their impact on your journey of faith.

*2. In what ways:

A. are you living into Jesus' call to fish for people?

B. is Jesus leading you to fish for people?

*3. Read and discuss Matthew 5:1-12.

CHAPTER SIX: BEGINNING AND CONTINUING

*1. Have you had an experience like that described by Bishop Doyle at the start of this chapter? Are there elements of that experience you are willing to relate to the group?

2. How do you experience prayer in your own life?

3. Read and respond to the quote from Karl Rahner (p. 48).

*4. What section of the Lord's Prayer, as explained by the Bishop had the most impact on you?

*5. Have you thought about prayer as described by the Bishop?

“When we pray, we participate in the divine life of love, the divine community, the divine conversation. As God's creatures we become entangled in the embrace of God.”

*6. Read and discuss the last three sentences of this chapter, beginning on p. 53: If we are following...

CHAPTER SEVEN: TURN, TURN, TURN

*1. Pray aloud and together the prayer beginning at the bottom of 59. How do you fit into the prayer? Discuss. Following the discussion pray aloud and together the prayer once more.

*2. Take a few minutes of quiet. Have each person respond to themselves in answering the following prayer:

Jesus, what do you want me to change?

Then pray: Jesus, send me your Spirit to grant me the strength and courage to change. In your name I pray. Amen.

CHAPTER EIGHT: DON'T HOLD BACK

1. What do you understand, both personally and in your church community, to be your place in the mission of Jesus?

*2. In what ways do you personally proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ?

*3. In what ways is your church proclaiming the Good News? In what ways would you like to see your church proclaim the Gospel?

4. To whom is God leading you to proclaim the Good News?

CHAPTER NINE: THE TABLE IS NOW MADE READY

*1. Read the last two paragraphs in “The Wedding Banquet” section starting at the bottom of p. 75. Have you considered this perspective before? How does the perspective impact your understanding of the parable?

*2. How can the church (how can you) in a fuller way take the banquet to the streets?

3. Read aloud the invitation to Communion on pp. 78-79. What connections does that make for you?

CHAPTER TEN: THE MAN AT THE GATE

*1. The Bishop asserts (p. 84): The radical message here is that we care for each other. Jesus' message is that we are now part of a radically reconfigured family wherein each one is a brother or sister for whom we are responsible. What do think about this statement? What are you doing about it?

2. Who is the person at your gate?

*3. What do you make of the twelve themes (pp. 87-88) the Bishop identifies based on the Baptismal Covenant?

*4. What does the breakdown of the word "Episcopal" (p. 89) mean in how you live your Christian life?

CHAPTER ELEVEN: YOU ARE THE ANSWER TO PRAYER

- *1. Consider a time when you might have been an answer to prayer. What was involved and what was the outcome?

2. In the broadest sense of the word, who has God sent as a missionary to you? To whom is God sending you?

3. What steps can you take to live into generous evangelism?

- *4. What has been your experience of resurrection in your own life? To whom have you related this experience?

- *5. What “comforts” of church are you willing to leave for the proclamation of the Gospel?

- *6. What are you willing to change in your life of faith for Jesus’ sake?

ENDNOTES

The following are offered as a selection of Statements of Significance made by the Bishop. These may be used as further opportunities for discussion. They are offered as *Andy's Notes*.

CHAPTER TWO

The Baptismal Covenant we make with God and our communities says we believe in a God who created and ordered the world but who ordered it for a particular purpose: for beauty and relationship. We believe in a God who watches over human life and interacts with all life on earth, with a particular relationship to the human community, through Jesus Christ.

You and I are making in our faith statements not simply promises about how we believe; we are also making statements about the kind of people we wish to become, and the type of world we wish to live in.

CHAPTER THREE

You carry within you the ability to announce to all people in your life—in your office, in your school, in your home—that God offers redemption where there is imprisonment and reconciliation where there is brokenness. The Lord is good and his mercy is everlasting.

CHAPTER FOUR

Claiming his story as our own, we come to understand that the fires of this world, not unlike the powers of this world, are of no consequence when measured against eternal life lived in Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER FIVE

It is the same for us. Jesus is here, offering the same invitation to drop everything and change the world. Go out and find the people. Be true fishers of souls who feel lost and left out.

So keep the word close. Walk in Jesus' footsteps. Let the Holy

Spirit work in you. This is the church in the world today.

CHAPTER SIX

God intends for us, through the Holy Spirit, to pray throughout our life and for our action to rise from our prayer and relationship with God.

We are in some real way, when we choose to follow Jesus, choosing not simply to learn to pray, but to pray as we live.

God is united in an infinite exchange of love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is the simplest way of understanding the divine union we call the Trinity. Prayer is not, in its very nature, simply a conversation with God. When we pray, we participate in the divine life of love, the divine community, the divine conversation. As God's creatures we become entangled in the embrace of God.

If we are following Jesus, then prayer must be the origin of our work. This is the way we come to know our place within the community of God. This is the way God's community comes alive on earth.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The only way we can grow nearer to God is to continually and honestly face our sins and repent and return to the Lord. Think of the urgency of John's and Elijah's messages. Our life depends upon this change.

CHAPTER NINE

The good news is that this is a partnership. We are not to save the world by ourselves. We are only to help God to save the world.

CHAPTER TEN

There is a man at the gate and it matters how we treat him. It matters to the man, it matters to Jesus, and most of all it matters to God.

Jesus makes it clear that, if we love him, he expects us to care for those who have been abandoned, marginalized—for the sheep who have no shepherd.

On the contrary, Jesus' message is that we are now part of a radically reconfigured family wherein each one is a brother and sister for whom we are responsible.

Epi means "on or above," and scope means "to see in order to act, to target, to observe." Our unique Episcopal version of the gospel understands that we see and act for the whole world—including the man at the gate.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

We share the good news because of how Jesus has affected our lives. We listen and talk and share with others our of Jesus and his Episcopal Church because grace and mercy are contagious.

You can have a beautiful church, wonderful music, priests and bishops everywhere, but if we are not sharing stories and helping God to change lives, then we are not doing our gospel work.

The Episcopal Church must leave the building and take its unique and unabashed messages on the road.

The world does not need more religious people content in their pews with their private, polite, personal Jesus. The world needs a vital, living missionary organism that is, in solidarity with the community in which God has planted it.





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