

# What Does It Mean?

Contra Costa Gospel Church  
Adult Sunday School

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Matthew 18:20

[NIV] *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."*

[NAS] *"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."*

[NKJ] *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

[ESV] *"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."*

[NLT] *"For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I am there among them."*

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## **Small groups:**

- 1) Are you familiar with this verse? What is your experience with this verse? Where might you have seen it before?
- 2) What is the essence of the verse? In other words, how would you paraphrase this verse? Also, with what area of Christian living does this verse tend to be associated (see v. 19)?
- 3) According to the cursory understanding of this verse, what does this verse have to say about prayer that is done privately? What does this verse have to say about prayer that is done in a group larger than three?
- 4) According to the cursory understanding of this verse, what's the difference between when Jesus is "there" in the midst of people praying and when He is not?

## **All together:**

- 5) As we have discussed before, we have to spend our time looking at the larger and immediate contexts of this verse in order to arrive at Author's Intended Meaning. Concerning the larger context, this verse occurs in the fourth great message of Jesus (out of five) in the gospel of Matthew. In this case, the topic at hand seems to be the behavior of those who are IN the kingdom of heaven already (believers). How do we know this to be the case?
- 6) As it concerns the immediate context, what is the general idea of what Jesus is talking about in vv. 4-14?

- 7) We see a transition of subject material at v. 15. This topic continues from vv. 15-20. What is the general idea of the subject material starting at v. 15, and how does it relate to the previous section?
- 8) When speaking of “two or three” in vv. 16 and 20, Jesus seems to be invoking language derived from the Old Testament. See Deuteronomy 17:6, and again in Deuteronomy 19:15. How does the Old Testament reference to “two or three” relate to Jesus’ usage of the term here?
- 9) What then do you think it means when Jesus says He will be in the “midst” of the two of three?
- 10) What it comes to private prayer vs. group prayer, what do the following passages teach us about private prayer and its effectiveness?
  - a. Matthew 6:6
  - b. Hebrews 4:14-16