

January 26, 2025

We Are a Priesthood of All Believers

1 Peter 2:1-10

For many years, Nancy Duff has trained small-group leaders, so she has extensive experience with how small groups work and affect those who participate in them. She writes about how small groups and support groups in the church give laity opportunities to be “priests” to one another.

“When our small groups meet, members perform many ‘priestly’ roles using their spiritual gifts: they teach one another and interpret Scripture; they pray for one another; they speak God’s love and forgiveness to one another; and they minister through acts of compassion and care. They also serve as priests to the world—praying for family members, friends, and strangers; serving together in Jesus’ name; and in other ways representing the living God to his world. Whether or not they realize it, as they do all these things, our small group members are living out the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers.” Duff says that whether the groups meet “in living rooms [or on the] church campus,” no matter the participants’ ages or what they’re studying, “all expect to encounter God and grow spiritually together; and all—to some degree—forge bonds of care.”¹

First Peter 2:1-10 paints a vibrant picture of who we are in Christ: a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and God’s own possession. We are called to live in community, working together to build God’s kingdom and reflect light in the world. And we are called to this priesthood because God designed us not for isolation but for community. Together, we form a foundation that glorifies God and reflects God’s love to the world.

Every person has a unique and essential role in God’s Kingdom. Even when we feel insignificant or misplaced, God assures us that we are valuable and needed in His greater plan to be priests to one another and the world. This truth challenges us to set aside stumbling blocks—our insecurities or behaviors—and embrace our role because our priesthood isn’t just a title; it’s a calling to serve others. As priests, we are called to lift up one another, recognize the gifts in others, and work together to create a community that reflects God’s grace and mercy. Kingdom-building isn’t a solo task; it’s a collective effort, requiring each person’s unique contributions.

In a world that reminds us of our need for connection and purpose, this calling is more important than ever. We are not just individual believers but part of a holy nation, knit together by love and called to proclaim God’s wonderful acts. Being part of this royal priesthood is a gift, but it also comes with responsibility. It challenges us to set aside selfishness, envy, and ill will, replacing them with spiritual growth, humility, and love. This is how we honor our identity as God’s people: by living as reflections of the Kingdom and helping others find their place in it.

1. What gifts do you have that you can use to build God’s kingdom?
2. How can you live out God’s “royal priesthood” in your community?

3. What can you do to help others find their place as “living stones” in God’s spiritual temple?

¹From “Doing Life Together: A Priesthood of All Believers,” by Nancy A. Duff, *Theology Matters* (November 16, 2017).

Written by the *Adult Bible Studies* team.