

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

4/10/22

Ice Breaker (10min):

Help people to loosen up and share. Take time to go around the room and have people share their name, how long they have been a part of Society Church and a high/low from the week.

Opening Prayer (5min):

- **Introduce time of prayer-** After the group welcomes one another, open in prayer. Let your group know what to expect during prayer time, something like: As we start our group time I will open with a word of prayer, there will be a minute or so of silent reflection and then I will read the scripture from Sunday and then close in prayer and we will enter into our discussion time.
 - **Open with a brief word of prayer-** God we thank you for this time together, we open our hearts to how you might want to meet with us, allow us to hear your voice and experience your spirit at work. Come Holy Spirit.
 - **Sit before the Lord in silent prayerful reflection for 1-2 minutes**
 - **Read the scripture listed below aloud for the group to reflect on.**
 - **Close in a word of prayer:** God thank you for your word, come holy spirit and allow us to understand what it means for our lives, lead us in our time of discussion together. In Christ's name, amen.

Main Scriptures from Sunday:

Micah 6:6-8

Read this message overview to the group: (5min)

This was our last week in our series "Life Together". Pastor Tim shared a message about the biblical perspective of "Justice". There are over 400 times the Bible speaks on justice! That number should signify to us just how important this is to God and what that means for us in our journey of faith. Many of the restorative justice passages in scripture are addressing what biblical scholars call the **Quartet of the Vulnerables** mentioned again and again as a measure of a just society- the poor, orphan, widow and immigrant. The forgotten, marginalized and those left alone without help.

Before we engage in conversation with one another around an important topic let's consider some of our church relational values: (Read through these briefly)

- **We allow love to lead the way** // We are patient, kind, humble, flexible, difficult to offend, merciful, celebrators of good, faithful, hopeful giving others the benefit of the doubt, assuming the best of others), and resilient.
- **We are devoted to seeking first God's kingdom** // This sets a values matrix to run decisions and priorities through, as well as empowers us to live distinctive gospel-centered lives. (Gentle encouragement...we know you care about your politics, but consider that not everyone will share your views and this is not the space to debate. Share responsibility & thoughtfully).
- **We celebrate our unique stories** // Another way to say it "we will be good listeners and respect each others stories")
- **We treat each other as humans & family members** // We all hold the "Imago Dei".
- **We are an inclusive community, not an exclusive** // We will hold space for differences and respect that everyone has a seat at the table.

Work though these discussion questions together (30min):

Kyle M Yates a biblical scholar in the early 1900's wrote in his commentary on Micah *"It is good to find a worthy champion of the poor who has courage and power to deliver an effective message. Knowing his fellows so intimately Micah was able to present in vivid colors the challenge to justice and consideration. His profound sympathy with the oppressed people came to life in unforgettable words. His spirit burned with righteous indignation as he saw the rank injustice upon his neighbors and friends. The poor peasants of Judah had a strong champion in this powerful young preacher from the country."*

Micah was from Moresheth, he lived outside of the powerful temple system and politics of both Jerusalem and Samaria in the northern and southern kingdoms. Micah was able to speak with clarity, conviction and correction to power out of his own place of poverty and personal experience of oppression. Notice his words are not soft, they are words of protest, correction, a call, and cry for justice. His words dance through the historical moment of injustice with both prophetic sharpness, and poetic mercy, with beautiful grace that comes from the Spirit. God is rebuking the elite land and business owners and reminding them of what is good.

Reread Micah 6:6-8

Let's discuss the three encouragements from this portion of scripture and how that might pertain to our own lives:

Act Justly:

- How would you describe what it means to "act justly"?
- 3 encouragements were given on how to engage with action around justice: Time, Treasure (resources), Talent (abilities &/or giftings). Which one of these seems to be the hardest for you to engage with? Is there one you are sensing God inviting you to participate more deeply with?

Love Mercy

- How would you describe what it means to "love mercy"?
- Tim mentioned "How do we decide if love withholds judgment, or stands in the gap and speaks up for justice? It seems almost contradictory. I don't know sometimes apart from being open to being led by the spirit and truth of God, including others in a process of godly discernment and using wisdom along the way." What do you think or has there been a time when you have struggled to know how or if you should hold judgment?
- Read Matthew 7:1-5 & Colossians 3:12-17 // Any thoughts?
- What might be one way you can encourage a love for mercy in your own heart as it relates towards others?

Walk Humbly Before God

- How would you describe what it means to "walk humbly before God"?

Out of these statements, which one resonates with you the most?

(Take a moment to read them, then go around the group and share)

> Humility is intimately linked to teachability. Are we open and willing to listen and learn from others?

> Living a comfortable, manageable life can be an enemy to humility. Because it causes us to think we have it all figured out. Letting go of control is a form of humility.

> Only doing what we are good at is an enemy to humility. God often leads us into what we are not good at naturally. God's power is made perfect in our weakness.

> Getting in community helps to nurture humility. Other people are better than you & I at things, other people know more than you and I, other people have more resources and opportunity than you and I, other people have more inspiring stories than you & I do. This nurtures teachability, and teaches us to manage envy and selfish ambition.

> Learn to live life with God- The presence of God brings comfort, encouragement, passion, correction and conviction. Walk humbly WITH God. Learning to live in the presence of God is central to humility. Every conversation, every work project, every relationship, every moment alone is all sacred ground.

>Circumstances have a way of humbling us, let them. Embrace it, don't run from it.

Group Prayer (10min):

- Go around the circle and share any prayer needs or requests. This week as the group leader, pray through the requests that were shared. Let the group know that in future weeks we will take time to pray together.

SHARED MEAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Our hope would be that Sermon Based Discussion Groups take 1-2 times a month to share a meal and put Sermon Based Discussion on pause. You can do potluck style, meet at a restaurant, order takeout, or prepare a meal. Get creative and have fun with it! Here are some suggested discussion starters for weeks you want to do a shared meal and prayer.

- How are you coming into our time/dinner/group today?
- What is a way you have experienced God this week?
- What are some highs and lows from your week?
- What might be something you'd like to bring to prayer tonight?

Prayer Times & Ideas: Pray for the needs mentioned during your discussion at the end of your meal together. Introduce a time of prayer before dessert, go around and share prayer requests and ask each person to pray for the person on their right. Ask the group to find someone to share prayer requests and pray with and for before the end of the night together.