

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

5/1/22

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 **share a highlight from your week thus far.**

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:

John 20:19-23

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

Happy May! Can you believe that April has come and gone, and May is here. This Sunday we continued in our new series "Eastertide". This time between resurrection and Jesus' ascension is called Eastertide in the church calendar. It is a time in between, a time of celebration of resurrection, of feasting and encounter with Jesus, although he appears and interacts differently in this season of his ministry with his disciples.

This week we heard a message from Pastor Josh titled "All shall be well". From our passage of scripture we read a proclamation Jesus made to his disciples. This was meant to bring encouragement to them in a time of fear, disorienting circumstances and more. Pastor Josh encouraged us that "not only did he proclaim this to the disciples for encouragement but I believe they are meant to bring encouragement to us even today".

Let's discuss.

Work though these discussion questions together (30min):

Let's spend some time working through these questions together. But first...Is there anything significant from this story in scripture that you want to discuss or notice with the group? Pastor Josh had two main points that we will center our discussion around.

Peace be with you even through the scariest and darkest moments of life.

- Consider the journey of the disciples. (Maybe close your eyes and imagine the setting.) They are now locked behind closed doors, fearful and disoriented; their friend had just died. Given the past two years we've all been through, maybe you've lost much, become fearful and even disoriented; maybe you can relate to the disciples in some way. Is there a moment over the past few years (or beyond) that felt scary or dark?
- Jesus said to the disciples "peace be with you" and scripture says in John 20:20 "after he said this he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord." What a wild turn of events. How do you think you would respond?
- Can you think of a time when you felt the peace of God during or after a scary or dark moment of life?

Peace be with you to move forward and through locked doors.

- Jesus came and revealed himself to Mary and the disciples in an effort to encourage them forward beyond their fear and give them peace. There was a message of good news that needed to be shared. Faith, hope and love to be inspired in the hearts of others from the disciples and what they experienced with Jesus. What might be an invitation you are sensing Jesus giving you to move more towards him? Are you finding this especially difficult right now?
- Apostle Paul encourages us to live in peace. Take a moment to read Philippians 4:4-9. These are some of the encouragements Pastor Josh highlighted:
 - *Rejoice* // Be glad and rejoice
 - *Be Gentle* // Be merciful and forgiving others
 - *Converse with God* // Present what makes you anxious to him and ask him to help
 - *Be mindful of the goodness of God around you* // Peace is not the absence of negativity it's the presence of God within us.
 - *Live out the way of Jesus* // Love God, love your neighbor and inspire people to become learners of Jesus.

Are there any of these that you are particularly drawn to that you hope to embody more of for yourself and for the sake of others?

Is there one you are delighting in right now that you can encourage the group with how that particular action is bringing transformation within?

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.