

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

5/8/22

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.**

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 20:24-29 (NIV)

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

This Sunday we continued in our new series "Eastertide". This time between resurrection and Jesus' ascension is called Eastertide in the church calendar. Pastor Tim gave a message titled "Dealing with Doubt".

He started off by asking the question:

WHO DO YOU TRUST? No one...?

WHO DO YOU LOVE? Everyone...?

"I believe love at its core involves a lot of trust. We cannot truly love without trust. Therapists and Psychologists would tell us that trust is the foundation of any healthy relationship. Trust is a foundational part of experiencing and giving love in relationships both with people and God. Trust is also something we give as a gift to both ourselves and others. It provides the support needed to relationally bond with others. When trust has been broken, trauma happens in our soul. Yet, We must learn to develop a wise and resilient trust that is full of discernment, forgiveness and space for difference in order to keep the bond of trust alive in us. Learning to give and receive trust, this forms the bond that forms loving relationships. Faith at its core essence is trust in God. It is the relational bond and glue that holds us together with God. It is the conduit of relationships. To become people who have a faith stronger than doubt we must learn to allow our hearts to trust God more fully."

Work though these discussion questions together (30min):

Our time of discussion will be centered around the three points from Pastor Tim's message. This message was rich in content and we highly encourage you to go back and relisten or listen to it if you have not had the time to do so.

Confession of our doubt with God and others:

- Reread John 20:24-25. Is there anything from this passage that sticks out to you?
- Has there ever been a time when you experienced a season of doubt? How did you respond to that?
- Do you find it difficult to share your doubt openly and vulnerably to God and others?

Practice Presence through dark knights:

- Reread John 20:26. Is there anything from this verse that sticks out to you?
- Pastor Tim said this "The purpose of doubt is to cause us to go deeper with God. This is part of developing a theology of pursuit. God is a God who pursues us and invites us into pursuit of him, like any good relationship there is an invitation into mutual pursuit and responsiveness." What invitation might be offered in this statement?
- Is there an experience you have had or seen someone go through that has turned their doubt into a deeper relationship with God?

Don't let doubt have the final word:

- Reread John 20:27. Is there anything from this verse that sticks out to you?
- "Doubt is a great tool to lead us to pursuit of Jesus but a lousy place to live." Take a moment to slowly read James 1:3-9, thoughtfully listening. Take a note of one word or phrase that sticks out to you. Share that with the group and what that may be causing to think more deeply about.
- "What if we willingly confessed our doubts to both others and God (asking for wisdom as James suggests). And trusted that God would provide clarity and answer in due time because our God is trustworthy and willing to help." Take a moment now to think about something that might be surfacing for you. Consider how you might bring that before God this week as an invitation to go deeper with Him.

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.

Dealing with Doubt? Or someone who is? Consider these resources:

Book & Web Resources:

- AJ Swoboda- After Doubt: How to deconstruct your faith without losing it
- Dominic Done- When Faith Fails: Finding God in the shadow of doubt
- PursuingFaith.org
- Brian Zahnd- When Everything is on Fire: Faith forged from the ashes
- Rebecca McLaughlin- Confronting Christianity: 12 Hard Questions for the World's Largest Religion

Podcast:

- Theology in the Raw- Preston Sprinkle
- Faith and Doubt Podcast

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.