

# Practice Guide for October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2024

## Life Together, pt. 5—Do The Hard Work.

### Suggested Ice Breaker (5 minutes)

What's something silly or trivial you recently got into a disagreement about, but looking back now, it seems kind of funny?

### Opening (10 minutes)

Before beginning, open the meeting time with 2 minutes of silence to focus on God's presence. Afterward, ask someone to open in prayer, asking God to help us face the messiness of community and approach conflict with humility, compassion, and a desire for reconciliation.

Opening Question: What tends to be your default response when conflict arises—do you avoid it, tackle it head-on, or something else?

### Reflecting On Scripture (15 minutes)

Have someone read Matthew 5:21-24 aloud for the group.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. In Matthew 5, Jesus places emphasis on reconciling with others before even offering gifts at the altar. How do you think this reflects the priority Jesus places on healthy relationships?
2. How does seeing reconciliation as an act of worship change your perspective on handling difficult relationships?

### Community Practice (25 minutes)

Read aloud this quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in *Life Together*:

*The first service one owes to others in the fellowship consists in listening to them. Just as love of God begins with listening to His Word, so the beginning of love for others is learning to listen to them.*

Take 5-7 minutes to journal your response to these questions:

1. Reflect on a relationship in your life where conflict has arisen. Have you taken time to listen to the other person's perspective, or have you been quick to speak or judge?
2. How might God be calling you to grow in the area of addressing conflict in a life-giving way?

Share your answers in groups of two or three.

### **Group Discussion:**

How can our community embody the value of “Doing the Hard Work” when it comes to addressing conflict in a life-giving way?

What steps can we take as a group to ensure we foster a culture of reconciliation and forgiveness?

### **Closing Prayer (5 minutes)**

As we conclude our discussion, have someone read slowly this prayer by Richard Foster then close in their own words if they would like.

*O Lord, teach me to seek not so much to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.*

*Help me to enter into the pain and sorrow of those around me with humility and grace.*

*Where there is division, let me sow peace; where there is hurt, let me bring healing.*

*Teach me to reconcile broken relationships through your strength, with love that never fails.*

*In your name I pray, Amen.*

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### **Further Reading:**

- *Life Together* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *Emotionally Healthy Relationships* by Pete & Geri Scazzero
- *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* by Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, Sheila Heen