

# SMALL GROUPS

Growing in Christ

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of October 29, 2017

### BIG IDEA:

I can choose to deepen my relationships.

1

### GETTING STARTED

What's something you think is unique or special about the way you were raised?

2

### LOOKING BACK

How have you seen God at work over the last week? (If you're having trouble thinking of an answer to this, start making it a habit to pray something like this throughout the day, every day: "God, show me what You're doing today, and let me be a part of it.")

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

(See Big Idea above)

3

### MY STORY

What are some of the relational skills we learn in our families that affect how we interact in the world (school, work, social events, church, etc.)?

What key connections do we have in our lives besides our immediate family?

How do our connections affect our mental health?

How do our connections influence our approach to understanding and obeying God?

4

### DIGGING DEEPER

**Matthew 22:36-38 (NLT)** <sup>36</sup> "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.'

<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.

God has designed us to be in relationship with Him. How do we connect with God in a relational way?

How does God connect with us relationally?

What are you willing to do on a daily basis to deepen your relationship with God?

# 4

## DIGGING DEEPER (CONTINUED)

**Matthew 22:39-40 (NLT)** <sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' <sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

God has designed us to be in relationship with each other. What gets in the way of healthy relationships?

How well do you know the neighbors who live around you? What are you willing to do to deepen those relationships?

What do you think Jesus meant when He said "the entire law and all the demands of the prophets" are based on loving God and loving our neighbor?

If someone hasn't had healthy, loving relationships modeled for them in their family, how can they learn to love well?

*The Mental Health Resource Guide for Individuals and Families* lists symptoms and warning signs of how to recognize anxiety disorder (page 12). 18% of adults and 8% of adolescents suffer from anxiety disorders. The symptoms often include unexplainable feelings of fear and obsessive and negative thoughts. Read the descriptions of two common types of anxiety below:

**Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD):** This form of anxiety causes people to have a difficult time getting through daily activities. People worry over everyday life situations where there is typically no cause for concern.

**Social Anxiety Disorder:** This extreme fear of being embarrassed in front of others can lead to isolation, depression, fear of public settings, and other negative reactions to social situations. [From [http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/resources/resource\\_guides/Hope\\_Resource\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthministries.net/resources/resource_guides/Hope_Resource_Guide.pdf)]

Based on these descriptions, how do you think anxiety disorders can affect a person's ability to connect with God & with other people?

How might anxiety affect someone's decisions about getting involved in a church community?

How might we help people suffering from anxiety disorders connect to God and to people in our church community?

In *Freedom from Anxiety and Depression*, author Mike Marino suggests ways to combat the effects of anxiety and depression on relationships. One suggestion is: "Recognize that this is a self-focused time for you and make attempts to notice and engage with others about their life."

How does this suggestion fit with the Apostle John's statement that "perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18)?

What is someone gaining when they are plugged into a small group?

# 5

## BRINGING IT HOME

If you have a friend family member struggling with anxiety or depression, you might wonder, "What can I do to help?" *Freedom from Anxiety and Depression* has practical suggestions and is available from Amazon.com in a Kindle edition, or hard copies will be available at New Day's Sunday worship services. Learning more will help us love better. And love is the greatest command.

# 6

## PRAYER REQUESTS

**This Week:** As an exercise in taking our eyes off ourselves, write a one-sentence prayer expressing to God what amazes you about Him. During your group prayer time, have each person read their one-sentence prayer. (Read Ephesians 3:14-21 as an amazing example of passionate prayer.)