

# Small Group Ministry

## Spring 2023 – Week 6

### Opening Prayer:

Common to all Small Groups

**Lord, we thank you for today and for this time to gather as friends in faith. We pray for our church and our community. Guide us and help us to deepen friendships and seek to grow in faith together. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

### Opening Discussion

1. How is everyone? Highs /lows from the week?
2. Do you like it when others take care of you? Or are you more comfortable being the caregiver?

### What is a Small Group?

- Faith Exercise - Intentionally deepening our relationship with God.
- Building Community - Intentionally deepening our relationship with others in faith.
- Common Interest – Intentionally celebrating common ground.

### Group Parameters:

- Gatherings will begin with Prayer & Scripture to unify this ministry across the groups.
- Members will remain courteous and ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to share.
- Thoughts and feelings shared are private and should remain confidential.
- You are encouraged to share news but cautioned about crossing into the territory of gossip.
- Grow in friendship, faith, and community with one another through this experience.

### 1 Peter 2:19-25

<sup>19</sup> For it is a commendable thing if, being aware of God, a person endures pain while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> If you endure when you are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do good and suffer for it, this is a commendable thing before God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps.

<sup>22</sup> “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.”

<sup>23</sup> When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, having died to sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

### John 10:1-10

#### Jesus the Good Shepherd

<sup>10</sup> “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. <sup>2</sup> The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. <sup>3</sup> The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup> When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. <sup>5</sup> They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” <sup>6</sup> Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>7</sup> So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. <sup>8</sup> All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. <sup>9</sup> I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. <sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

## Psalm 23

### The Divine Shepherd

*A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup>The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters;

<sup>3</sup> he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup>Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup>You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.



### Discussion Questions:

#### Psalm 23

Of all the psalms, Psalm 23 is certainly the most well-known and the favourite of many people. **What is it about this psalm that speaks to you? What is it about this psalm that makes it so popular? What is it about this psalm that speaks to peoples' need?**

Here is another translation (paraphrase) of Psalm 23 by Eugene Peterson:

*God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing. You have bedded me down in lush meadows; you find me quiet pools to drink from. True to your word, you let me catch my breath and send me in the right direction.*

*Even when the way goes through Death Valley, I'm not afraid when you walk by my side. Your trusty shepherd's crook makes me feel secure. You serve me a six-course dinner right in front of my enemies.*

*You revive my drooping head; my cup brims with blessing. Your beauty and love chase after me every day of my life. I'm back home in the house of God for the rest of my life.*

#### 1 Peter 2:19-25

This letter is addressing a very different social and cultural situation than the one in which we live (i.e. Roman culture of the 1st century). We certainly need to be cautious when discerning scriptural references to suffering within a system that we don't understand. However, we can draw from this reading the following: "1 Peter offers a strategy of nonverbal resistance that is patterned after Jesus. It speaks to the power of non-retaliation and the strength required to wield our words in ways that honor God. The substance of our response is not reflected in how quickly we can manipulate language to get what we want or hurl insults back at those who insult us or speak ill of those who are ill-treating us. Rather, it is reflected in the integrity of our actions and our awareness that we live in service to a God who will have the last word."

*"He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls."*

**In what ways have you experienced Jesus as "the shepherd and guardian" of your soul as you faced troubling situations?**

#### John 10:1-10

"The whole of John's Gospel is focused on the gift of life, (e.g., 1:4, 3:1, 11:25, 17:3, 20:31). "Life" or "eternal life" in John's Gospel is not just about life after death. It is life that begins here and now; it is knowing the one true God and Jesus Christ whom God has sent. It is knowing the voice of the Good Shepherd who truly cares for us. It is life in community, finding security and nourishment as part of his flock. It is life that abounds in meaning and value and endures even beyond death."

**What or who are the thieves that come to steal and kill and destroy in our day and age? How have you experienced the abundant life that is found in Jesus Christ?**

#### Musical Reflection:

Mark & Janyce Arnill - 23

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6-OQ7D7AiY>

Crowder - Shepherd

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naLHMmIMgX0>

How can the group pray for you this week?

