

Small Group Ministry

Spring 2023 – Week 7

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. What is your favourite thing about your favourite dwelling place? Why?

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 2:2-10

² Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation— ³ if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

⁴ Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and ⁵ like living stones let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For it stands in scripture:

"See, I am laying in Zion a stone,
a cornerstone chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame."

⁷ This honor, then, is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe,

"The stone that the builders rejected
has become the very head of the corner,"

⁸ and

"A stone that makes them stumble
and a rock that makes them fall."

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

¹⁰ Once you were not a people,
but now you are God's people;
once you had not received mercy,
but now you have received mercy.

John 14:1-14

Jesus the Way to the Father

¹⁴ "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. ⁴ And you know the way to the place where I am going." ⁵ Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" ⁶ Jesus said to him, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

⁸ Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." ⁹ Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. ¹¹ Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. ¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Psalm 31

Prayer and Praise for Deliverance from Enemies
To the leader. A Psalm of David.

1 In you, O Lord, I seek refuge;
do not let me ever be put to shame;
in your righteousness deliver me.

2 Incline your ear to me;
rescue me speedily.
Be a rock of refuge for me,
a strong fortress to save me.

3 You are indeed my rock and my fortress;
for your name's sake lead me and guide me;

4 take me out of the net that is hidden for me,
for you are my refuge.

5 Into your hand I commit my spirit;
you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

6 You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,
but I trust in the Lord.

7 I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love,
because you have seen my affliction;
you have taken notice of my adversities

8 and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;
you have set my feet in a broad place.

9 Be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress;
my eye wastes away from grief,
my soul and body also.

10 For my life is spent with sorrow
and my years with sighing;
my strength fails because of my misery,
and my bones waste away.

11 I am the scorn of all my adversaries,
a horror to my neighbors,
an object of dread to my acquaintances;
those who see me in the street flee from me.

12 I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;
I have become like a broken vessel.

13 For I hear the whispering of many—
terror all around!—

as they scheme together against me,
as they plot to take my life.

14 But I trust in you, O Lord;
I say, "You are my God."

15 My times are in your hand;
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.

16 Let your face shine upon your servant;
save me in your steadfast love.

17 Do not let me be put to shame, O Lord,
for I call on you;
let the wicked be put to shame;
let them go dumbfounded to Sheol.

18 Let the lying lips be stilled
that speak insolently against the righteous
with pride and contempt.

19 O how abundant is your goodness
that you have laid up for those who fear you
and accomplished for those who take refuge in you,
in the sight of everyone!

20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from human plots;
you hold them safe under your shelter
from contentious tongues.

21 Blessed be the Lord,
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me
when I was beset as a city under siege.

22 I had said in my alarm,
"I am driven far from your sight."
But you heard my supplications
when I cried out to you for help.

23 Love the Lord, all you his saints.
The Lord preserves the faithful
but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.

24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage,
all you who wait for the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

Gospel of John:

Consider the following quote shared below. 'If we keep reading beyond verse 6, we realize that the Father has already come, is already present, in the life and ministry of Jesus. "If you know me" is a condition of fact, "if you know me, and you do." These are words of comfort, not condition, for the disciples. There is nothing uncertain for their present or their future because of their relationship with Jesus. Of that, Jesus wants them to be secure. The misunderstanding continues with Philip's request to see the Father, eliciting Jesus' most unambiguous claims about his identity.' Jesus is preparing the disciples for 'his departure' on the final night of his earthly ministry. **How might the church, in this time of uncertainty and change, find comfort as well in these words? The same question arises in personal challenges and uncertainty.** Also consider this, as one scholar points out, "consider that Jesus says to his disciples, "let not your (plural) heart (singular) be troubled." I (Rev. Mark) have never noticed that Jesus' statement in the Gospel of John highlights the idea of the disciples possessing one singular heart as a collective group of people." How might this perspective help us foster deeper relationships in our community of faith?

Psalm 31

We are repeatedly invited to 'seek refuge' in God (e.g., Psalm 31:1). How do you seek refuge in God?

1 Peter

"In 1 Peter 2:2-10, the writer piles one image on top of another, encouraging readers to imagine the boundless possibilities of Christian existence in light of Christ's life. Some of those images include: movement from darkness to light (2:9), babies drinking milk (2:2), constructing God's temple (2:4), believers as the outcome in God's decision-making process of election (2:4, 6, 9; see also 1:1; 5:13), believers as God's family (2:9-10, 7; see also 4:17), and the community as the site of God's presence and household (2:5)." **Share how you have experienced belonging with the community of faith AND how you have been surprised by the 'possibilities of Christian existence in light of Christ's life.'**

Musical Reflection: Pat Barrett – The Way, New Horizon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOzsJlk8p6I>

How can the group pray for you this week?

