



# RESOURCES FOR GROUPS

**TITLE:** Pursuing the Presence of God

**DATE:** March 21, 2021

**TEXT:** Matthew 7:7-12

**SPEAKER:** Pastor Doug Schneider

## COMMUNITY BUILDING:

- Share a Bible promise and why it is special to you.
- Did you remember to sit often on the "Fellow Sinner" chair this week? How did the ideas of the chairs impact your heart in how you thought about other people?

## CHRIST-CENTERED DISCUSSION:

**Bold** indicates zoom friendly OR to be used with spiritual growth partners. *Italicized green text is the leader guide.*

*This week, we are reflecting on the service as a whole, not only the sermon. There are two exercises to work through as a group as well as a few questions reflecting on the sermon.*

### Sermon Questions

**In Matt. 7:7-12, what do we learn about our Father? How would that have encouraged the disciples? What is the guiding principle regarding prayer in these verses?**

How can the previous topics Jesus dealt with in the Sermon on the Mount (esp. 7:1-6) guide us in what we should be asking for, seeking, and knocking for?

### Meditation Exercise

This week's memory verse is Psalm 105:4 and it's a great exercise in meditating. Meditation is slowing down to "chew on content from the Bible until we begin to feel its magnitude in our hearts." (Habits of Grace, Mathis) Take 10-15 minutes and walk through the following steps as you practice meditation on this verse as a group. Ask each question and then allow some silent time (30-60 seconds) before going onto the next question. Don't discuss thoughts until the very end to allow God's Spirit to speak individually throughout the exercise.

- Read the verse as a group a few times slowly.
- What does "seek" mean?
- What does it say we should seek? How are those things related to each other?
- Who is the LORD? What is his strength like? Why seek his face?
- What are the practical implications of the word "always"?
- What strengths in yourself or others do you rely on before seeking the Lord's strength?
- Think about the parts of the verse as a whole. What good comes from practicing these things?

Talk about thoughts and ideas that came out of your individual meditation on this verse. What aspects of it rose to the surface as you reflected slowly and deeply?

## Lament Exercise

The worship team guided us through the steps of lament during this Sunday's service. Lament is an "honest expression of grief in the context of God's goodness." Review the lament steps below:

1. Be open and honest about your circumstances and emotions.
2. Remember who God has proven himself to be in the past and promised to be in the future. God does not change.
3. Present your requests to God. Be honest about what you would like him to do.
4. Anchor yourself in specific truths about God.

Do these steps make sense to you? Have you ever lamented in this way before?

*Have someone pull up "Brokenness Aside" by All Sons & Daughters. Play the song and as you listen to it, spend time in personal or corporate lament using the steps you discussed.*

*If you choose to lament in out-loud prayer, have the leader start each new step of the lament for the group to guide everyone through the prayer time.*

## FAITHFULLY FOLLOWING:

- *Talk about any of the "faithfully following" questions and exercises that group members have tried out in the last weeks. Have any new habits or rhythms emerged?*
- The Joyful Journey resource page on our website has many Faithfully Following pieces.