

Christ Community Church

Community Group Discussion Guide for Week of September 6, 2026

Announcements

1. **Community Group:** Be sure to access your Community Group document to sign up to bring a snack or dessert item to a future Community Group?
2. **Boiler Room Prayer Gathering:** Join others on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of every month at 9:00 AM in the YMCA to pray for ourselves, our neighbors, our city, and whatever else.
3. **Future Meetups:** MAC Sunday is Sept. 13 at Mac's Pizza Pub in Blue Ash after Church - Men's Meetup is Sept. 17 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at MPH in Montgomery - Women's Meet up is Oct. 1 from 7:30 to 9:00 PM at the Jama Home for Bonfire.
4. **OGB Coat Drive:** Bring new and gently used coats to the Operation Give Back donation bin at the Blue Ash YMCA Starting September 1st-October 18th to help keep local children and families warm throughout the winter months.

Opening Question

Tell us who you are, what you do, where you're from, and what your go-to comfort food is?

1 Samuel 4:1-11

Leader's Note: Open with a brief prayer, asking God to make the group receptive to His Word. Then invite someone to read the passage aloud. (For longer sections, consider dividing the reading among several people.)

[1] And the word of Samuel came to all Israel.

Now Israel went out to battle against the Philistines. They encamped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines encamped at Aphek. [2] The Philistines drew up in line against Israel, and when the battle spread, Israel was defeated before the Philistines, who killed about four thousand men on the field of battle. [3] And when the people came to the camp,

the elders of Israel said, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD here from Shiloh, that it may come among us and save us from the power of our enemies.” [4] So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the LORD of hosts, who is enthroned on the cherubim. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

[5] As soon as the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout, so that the earth resounded. [6] And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, “What does this great shouting in the camp of the Hebrews mean?” And when they learned that the ark of the LORD had come to the camp, [7] the Philistines were afraid, for they said, “A god has come into the camp.” And they said, “Woe to us! For nothing like this has happened before. [8] Woe to us! Who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods? These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness. [9] Take courage, and be men, O Philistines, lest you become slaves to the Hebrews as they have been to you; be men and fight.”

[10] So the Philistines fought, and Israel was defeated, and they fled, every man to his home. And there was a very great slaughter, for thirty thousand foot soldiers of Israel fell. [11] And the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

Discussion Questions

1. In **1 Samuel 4:1–3**, Israel suffers a surprising defeat and asks, “Why has the LORD defeated us today before the Philistines?” They recognize that God is involved, but rather than seeking Him for the answer, they immediately come up with their own solution. **Tell us about a time when an unexpected outcome caused you to reconsider what you were doing or where you were headed?**

Potential Follow Up Question(s): What did seeking God—or not seeking God—look like for you in that moment?

2. In **1 Samuel 4:3–5**, Israel brings the ark of the covenant into battle because they believe it will guarantee God’s help, but they are more interested in what God can do for them than in actually seeking God Himself. **Why do you think it can be easier for us to ask God to bless our plans rather than follow His?**

Potential Follow Up Question(s): How can we tell the difference between genuinely seeking God’s direction and simply asking Him to give us what we already want?

What might it look like to hold our own plans more loosely before God?

3. In **1 Samuel 4:6–9**, both Israel and the Philistines assume that because God had powerfully delivered Israel in the past, the presence of the ark meant He would surely give Israel victory again. God’s past faithfulness gives us reason to trust Him, but it does not mean we always know what He will do next. **Tell us about a time when God worked differently than you expected but, looking back, you can see His faithfulness in it.**

Potential Follow-Up Question(s): How can remembering what God has done in the past help us trust Him without assuming we know what He will do next?

4. In **1 Samuel 4:10–11**, Israel discovers that neither their army, their priests, nor even the ark itself can give them the security they expected. Even good things can become false sources of security when we ask them to carry a weight they were never meant to carry. **What are some good things in our lives that we can easily begin depending on for our identity, happiness, or security?**

Potential Follow-Up Question(s): How can we enjoy things like family, work, money, health, success, or relationships without expecting them to give us what only God can provide? How might recognizing these things as gifts from God change the way we enjoy them—or respond when they change?

5. In **1 Samuel 4:1–11**, God’s judgment is painful, but He does not stand by while sin and false worship continue to destroy His people. God cares about what is wrong, and ultimately Jesus shows us that the God who judges rightly is also the God who bears judgment to save His people. **How might knowing that God loves us enough to confront what is harmful change the way we think about His correction or difficult truths in His Word?**

Potential Follow-Up Question(s): How do you typically respond when someone corrects or confronts you? How might seeing correction as something that can lead toward restoration, healing, and growth change the way you receive it?

Prayer

Leader’s Note: Wrap up your time by moving into prayer using ACTS—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication—as a simple guide. Move naturally through each category, inviting group members to share requests as appropriate and encouraging others to pray for them as they feel led, then close by thanking God for His Word and for your time together.

- **Adoration:** Praise God for who He is and what He has done, expressing your love, worship, and delight in Him.
- **Confession:** Honestly acknowledge the ways you have failed to trust God and His promises and to love Him and others as you should, receiving His forgiveness through Christ and asking for His grace to grow in faithful obedience.
- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for His grace, His provision, His faithfulness, His answered prayers, and the blessings that are yours in Christ.
- **Supplication:** Ask God to work in your life, your family, your church, your neighbors, and throughout the world, praying that His kingdom would come and His will would be done.