

## Small Group Discussion Questions - Winter Semester // Week Five

*Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.*

### Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) If you were invited to create your own late-night talk show, who would be your first i) interview guest, and ii) musical guest? Who (in your own life) do you think would make the best late-night talk show host?
- b) Tell us one of your best fishing stories! Do you prefer fishing in the summer or ice-fishing? What is the biggest fish that you have ever caught? If you haven't been fishing (or don't have anything to share), what is one of your favourite outdoor activities?

### Passage and Discussion

#### Read Jonah 1:17-2:10

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) In our series, we have been reminded often that Jonah was running away from God. Today what are a few reasons that you think people run from God? Have you known people in your life who have gone through seasons where they avoid God?
- c) If you feel comfortable sharing, have you ever run away from God during a season of your life? Why did you want to avoid Him? What happened that made you turn back to Him? What advice would you give to other people who are trying to run from Him?
- d) The first question that we asked on Sunday is: "what do I say to God?" Have you ever struggled to be fully honest or could not find the right words in your prayer life with God? What are a few examples of reasons that we try to 'censor' ourselves as we talk to God?
- e) What do you do when you don't know what to pray?
- f) In Jonah's prayer, he uses a lot of phrases/words from the Psalms. What do you think is the value of using language from the Bible to guide our prayer life? Have you ever used the scripture to help you pray? What passages (if any) do you pray most often?
- g) The second question that we asked on Sunday is: "will God hear me?" We believe that God always hears our prayers. How old were you when you first began to pray to God? Who first taught you how to pray in your relationship with God?

- h) Though we may 'know' that God hears us, we sometimes struggle to believe it. Have you ever walked through a season of life where you struggled to believe that God was able to hear you? If you feel comfortable, share about that time with the group.
- i) On Sunday, Dom reminded us that even if we don't have physical distance between us and God, we can sometimes have 'heart-distance' from Him'. How does this teaching resonate with you? How do we overcome the internal distance that we sometimes feel from God? Why is it important to keep praying, even if we aren't sure if God is able to hear us?
- j) Jonah's prayer reminds us about God's mercy and grace towards His children. This is a simple, but foundational teaching. If you were to describe this mercy/grace to someone who had not heard of Christianity, how would you describe it?
- k) **Read Luke 15:11-24.** What are the similarities between this story and the story of Jonah? What does this story tell us about the Father's love for us? How should it change the way that we live? How should God's mercy and grace encourage us towards obedience?
- l) Dom pointed out the similarities between the gospel and the story of Jonah. Compare and contrast these two stories. In what ways does Jonah's story resemble Christ's, and in what ways are they significantly different?
- m) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging?

### **Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)**

- a) This week, take a few minutes each day to thank God for His grace and mercy. You can use Jonah's prayer, or a different Scripture from the Psalms to help guide your time of prayer. Praise Him for His love and grace towards His children.
- b) This week, ask God to show you if there is anyone in your life that He wants you to share the Gospel with. Ask Him for the courage to share about God's grace and mercy with that person.

### **Optional Ideas for Prayer Time**

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.
- b) As a group, pray that each person would remember God's grace and mercy towards them in this season. If anyone is struggling with feeling distant from God, ask Him to reveal Himself to that person during this time.