

Small Group Guide: Psalm 42 - Responding to Spiritual Drought

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting God's presence and asking Him to speak to each person through this discussion.

Icebreaker Question

Share a time when you felt spiritually "dry" or distant from God. How did you recognize you were in that season?

Sermon Summary

This teaching from Psalm 42 addresses the reality of spiritual drought—those seasons when God feels distant, our prayers seem unanswered, and our souls are not well. The psalmist models how to respond faithfully during these difficult times by acknowledging the struggle, remembering God's faithfulness, and choosing to praise God anyway.

Key Takeaways

1. **Feelings are real, but they don't define reality** - Our emotions are valid, but God's truth and presence remain constant regardless of how we feel.
2. **Spiritual drought is a normal part of the Christian journey** - Every believer will experience seasons of spiritual dryness at some point.
3. **We must actively remind ourselves of God's goodness** - Like the psalmist, we need to preach truth to ourselves when our souls are dejected.

4. **God's presence never changes** - Even when we feel far from God, He has never left us or forsaken us.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Psalm 42 together.** What stands out to you most in this passage? What emotions do you hear in the psalmist's words?
2. The psalmist asks himself, "Why, my soul, are you so dejected?" **What does it mean to have this kind of internal dialogue with yourself?** Is this something you do?
3. In verse 5, the psalmist says, "I will still praise him." **How is it possible to praise God when you don't feel like it?** Is this being fake or dishonest?

Personal Reflection

4. **What are some common "lies" you tend to believe during seasons of spiritual drought?** (Examples: God has abandoned me, my prayers don't matter, I'm not a good enough Christian, etc.)
5. The sermon mentioned that "your feelings are not reality." **How do you balance acknowledging your real emotions while not letting them control your perspective of God?**
6. **When was the last time you experienced God's closeness and presence?** What was happening in your life during that season?

Practical Application

7. **What are some practical ways you can "remember and rehearse God's faithfulness" in your daily life?** (journaling, worship, Scripture memory, etc.)
8. The sermon emphasized the importance of community during spiritual drought. **Why is isolation so dangerous during these seasons?** How have you seen community help someone (or yourself) through a difficult time?

9. Gabe suggested meditating on one verse throughout the week rather than trying to read whole chapters. **What verse from Psalm 42 (or another passage) could you focus on this week?**

10. **Who in your life might be going through a spiritual drought right now?** How can you reach out to them this week?

Three Practical Responses to Spiritual Drought

1. ACKNOWLEDGE IT

- Don't pretend everything is fine
- Be honest with yourself, God, and trusted others
- Ask yourself: "What am I really feeling? Why might I be experiencing this?"

Group Activity: Take 2-3 minutes of silence for each person to honestly assess where they are spiritually right now.

2. REMEMBER AND REHEARSE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

- Preach truth to yourself
- Recall specific times God has been faithful
- Speak Scripture out loud
- Focus on who God is, not just how you feel

Group Activity: Go around and have each person share one specific way God has been faithful to them in the past.

3. GET IN COMMUNITY

- Don't isolate
- Share your struggles with trusted believers
- Let others speak truth and encouragement into your life
- Serve others even when you don't feel like it

Group Activity: Pair up and commit to checking in with each other this week about your spiritual health.

This Week's Challenge

Choose **ONE** of these to commit to this week:

- [] Memorize Psalm 42:5 and repeat it to yourself daily
- [] Journal about a time God was faithful to you in the past
- [] Reach out to someone in the group or church who might be struggling
- [] Choose one verse to meditate on all week (read it multiple times daily)
- [] Share with someone you trust about a spiritual struggle you're facing
- [] Attend or join a small group/community gathering

Closing Discussion

How can we pray for each other this week? Take time to share specific prayer requests, especially related to spiritual health and any droughts people are experiencing.

Closing Prayer

Have someone close in prayer, specifically asking God to:

- Help group members recognize spiritual drought when it comes
- Give strength to praise Him even in difficult seasons
- Remind everyone of His faithfulness and constant presence
- Draw the group closer together in authentic community
- Prepare hearts for Easter and those we'll be inviting

Additional Resources

Scriptures for Further Study:

- Psalm 121 - "My help comes from the Lord"
- Lamentations 3:22-23 - God's mercies are new every morning
- Hebrews 13:5 - "I will never leave you nor forsake you"
- Matthew 28:20 - "I am with you always, to the end of the age"

Questions for Personal Reflection:

- What "engine lights" am I ignoring in my spiritual life?
- Am I treating my feelings as reality or remembering what's actually true?
- Who can I invite into my struggle this week?

Notes for Group Leaders

- Be prepared to share your own experience with spiritual drought to model vulnerability
- Create a safe space where people feel comfortable being honest about their struggles
- Don't try to "fix" people's problems—sometimes they just need to be heard
- Follow up with anyone who shares a significant struggle during the week
- Encourage the group that spiritual drought is normal, not a sign of failure