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WEEK 1 Myths of Mental Health

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

When it comes to mental health issues, what kind of attitudes did your family have when you were growing up? How has that impacted what you believe now?

Big Idea:

Getting help isn't a sign of weakness, it's a sign of wisdom.

Key Scriptures: PSALM 88:3-5, 13-14, 18

"I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down to the pit; I am like one without strength...I am set apart with the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom you remember no more, who are cut off from your care. ... But I cry to you for help, LORD; in the morning my prayer

comes before you. Why, LORD, do you reject me and hide your face from me? ... You have taken from me friend and neighbor—darkness is my closest friend."

ISAIAH 26:3 NLT

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!"

2 PETER 1:3

"His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him..."

Discussion:

1. We begin this series by busting two common myths that many Christians may hold: 1) that Christians shouldn't struggle with mental health and 2) that God doesn't care about your mental health. Have you been tempted to believe these myths? If so, where

- did your belief come from?
- 2. Read the Psalm 88 verses. What do the words of this Psalmist tell you about the state of his mental health at the time?
- 3. Why do you think God may have included passages like this in His Word? (see also Elijah in 1 Kings 19, or Jeremiah in Lamentations 3)
- 4. Read Isaiah 26:3. How does this passage show God's care for those who might be struggling?
- 5. What is necessary to experience God's peace according to this passage?
- 6. What does it look like to trust God and to fix your thoughts on Him?
- 7. Read 2 Peter 1:3. Talk about the role God plays in your mental health. What would it look like to bring any mental health struggle to Him?
- 8. Share about a time when you experienced God's peace in the midst of problems or hardships. What were you doing then that you could start doing again?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray this prayer for one another: "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole

spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it." 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Prayer Focus:

Pray for all who may be struggling with their mental health at this time to be drawn to engage during this series, whether in person or online. Pray for God's peace and His truth to transform lives.

Memory Verse:

"YOU WILL KEEP
IN PERFECT
PEACE ALL WHO
TRUST IN YOU,
ALL WHOSE
THOUGHTS ARE
FIXED ON YOU!"
ISAIAH
26:3 NLT



WEEK 2 Heal My Anxious Mind

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What one thing freaked you out most when you were a kid?

Big Idea:

Prayer not only touches the heart of God, it changes the chemistry of your brain.

Key Scriptures: 2 CHRONICLES 20:1-12

"After this, the Moabites and Ammonites with some of the Meunites came to wage war against Jehoshaphat. Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is already in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. The people of Judah came

together to seek help from the Lord; indeed, they came from every town in Judah to seek him. Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the Lord in the front of the new courtyard and said:"Lord, the God of our ancestors, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. Our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your Name, saying, 'If calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your Name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save us.' "But now

here are men from Ammon,
Moab and Mount Seir, whose
territory you would not allow
Israel to invade when they came
from Egypt; so they turned
away from them and did not
destroy them. See how they are
repaying us by coming to drive
us out of the possession you
gave us as an inheritance. Our
God, will you not judge them?
For we have no power to face
this vast army that is attacking
us. We do not know what to do,
but our eyes are on you."

2 CHRONICLES 20:15, 17

"Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army. For the battle is not yours, but God's. Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD will be with you."

1 PETER 5:7

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

PSALM 94:19

"When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought me joy."

Discussion:

- 1. Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-12. When Jeoshaphat was king of Israel, a vast army came against them. Talk about anxiety! What did he do in response? What did the people of Israel do?
- 2. What declaration did Jehoshapat make at the end of his prayer?
- 3. Read 2 Chronicles 20:15,17. What was God's response to the prayer of Jehoshapat and the people of Israel?
- 4. Read 1 Peter 5:7 and
 Philippians 4:6-7. Clearly
 Jehoshapat cast his care
 upon God. What would it
 look like to cast your anxiety
 on God?
- 5. How could that impact your mental health?
- 6. Share some of the situations or issues that you're currently facing that are causing anxiety. How could you and others pray over those things?
- Read Psalm 94:19. Talk about a time when you experienced God's consolation in the midst of

anxiety. What did praising Him look like? How could you praise Him this week?

Wrapping It Up:

Be reminded today that anxiety is part of being human. God reveals and affirms through His Word, the normalcy of it. But He also invites us to seek and trust Him in the midst of it. As you close today, pray together about the things you identified in your discussion.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our middle and high school students, many who struggle with anxiety. Pray for their ability to recognize that they can cast their cares upon God and for them to be able to find consolation in Him. Also pray for their leaders, that they would have discernment in giving them wise biblical counsel.

Memory Verse:

"DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT
ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERY SITUATION,
BY PRAYER AND PETITION, WITH
THANKSGIVING, PRESENT YOUR
REQUESTS TO GOD. AND THE PEACE
OF GOD, WHICH TRANSCENDS ALL
UNDERSTANDING, WILL GUARD YOUR
HEARTS AND YOUR MINDS IN CHRIST
JESUS."
PHILIPPIANS
4:6-7



WEEK 3 Battling Depression

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What do you believe to be the biggest misconception about depression?

Big Idea:

God's love and compassion extends to those battling with depression.

Key Scriptures: LAMENTATIONS 3:1-2, 5-8, 17-20

"I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of the LORD's wrath. He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light ... He has besieged me and surrounded me with bitterness and hardship. He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead. He has walled me in so I cannot escape; he has weighed me down with chains. Even

when I call out or cry for help, he shuts out my prayer. ... I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is. So I say, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the LORD." I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me."

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23-26

"Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

Discussion:

- 1. Read Lamentations 3:1-2, 5-8, 17-20. How does hearing the depths of depression, as penned by Jeremiah the prophet, impact your views around the struggles and despair a person might feel in the midst of it?
- 2. In what ways can you relate to his expressions?
- 3. Read Lamentations 3:21-23. After expressing his deepest darkness, Jeremiah goes on to proclaim the faithfulness of God. What are some things that help you remember God's love and goodness in the midst of difficult seasons?
- 4. How do you typically handle negative or depressing thoughts and feelings?
- 5. What would it look like to validate your emotions and label your feelings while also remembering they aren't permanent?
- 6. How might you be able to, like Jeremiah, hold on to hope in the Lord?
- 7. Talk about a time when God brought you hope and help in a difficult moment. What did you learn about Him through that experience?

Wrapping It Up:

Listen to "Promises" by Maverick City and be encouraged in the faithfulness of God. https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=q5m09rqOoxE&list= RDq5m09rqOoxE&start_radio=1

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our ReVive volunteer biblical counselors as they seek to minister to those who are struggling with depression.

Memory Verse:

"YET THIS I CALL TO MIND AND THEREFORE I HAVE HOPE: BECAUSE OF THE LORD'S GREAT LOVE WE ARE NOT CONSUMED, FOR HIS COMPASSIONS NEVER FAIL. THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING; GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS."

LAMENTATIONS
3:2-22



WEEK 4 Worry

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Think about and share with the group the last thing you worried about. Did that worry come to pass?

Big Idea:

What you worry about most, reveals where you trust God the least.

Key Scriptures: MATTHEW 6:25

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear..."

MATTHEW 26:34

"Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself..."

MATTHEW 6:26

"Look at the birds of the air;

they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?"

MATTHEW 6:27

"Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?"

MATTHEW 6:33

"But seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

Discussion:

- Less than 10% of what you worry about will happen.
 But your worry will rob you of peace 100% of the time.
 How have you seen this to be true in your own life?
- Jesus talked much about worry, read what he said in the Matthew passages. Discuss what you believe

- to be His primary message when it comes to worry.
- 3. Read Matthew 6:33. How could seeking God's kingdom impact your thought life and worries?
- 4. Talk about the difference between worry and concern. How could you change your worries into concern that moves you to action?
- 5. Share about a time when you worried about something that didn't actually happen or wasn't as bad as you thought. How could that experience impact how you handle worry this week?

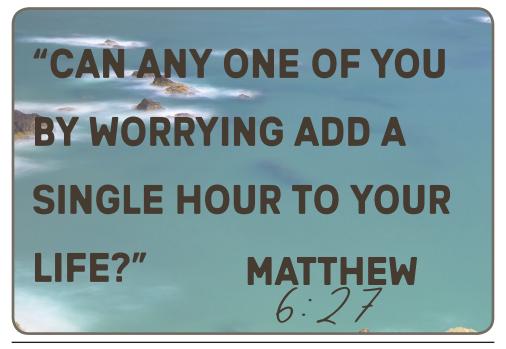
Wrapping It Up:

Take a few moments together for each of you to write down three things that you tend to worry about. Now pray about those things together, and then commit to start each day this week praying to surrender those things to God.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for the Hope Redemption Center (can redemption) and their staff as a percentage of their profit goes to support the Hope Center. And for those who they employ who are looking to change/improve their lives

Memory Verse:





WEEK 5 Degative Thoughts

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

"No one is more influential in your life than you are, because no one talks to you more than you do." —Dr. Paul David Tripp Discuss your thoughts about this statement.

Big Idea:

Your thoughts have incredible power, but you have incredible power over your thoughts.

Key Scriptures: PROVERBS 4:23 GNT

"Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts."

1 SAMUEL 30:3-4, 6

"When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ... David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God."

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

"We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."

ROMANS 8:5-6

"Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace."

PHILIPPIANS 4:8

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Discussion:

- 1. Read Proverbs 4:23. How have you seen this to be true in your own life?
- 2. We learned in this week's message that your thoughts have incredible power, but you have incredible power over your thoughts. And that negative events imprint on our brains more quickly and linger longer than positive ones. Where are you most prone to negativity?
- 3. Read 1 Samuel 30:3-4, 6. In this scenario, David certainly had reason to be distressed. Discuss how he managed to navigate through this great tragedy and ensuing distress.
- 4. Read 2 Corinthians 10:5.

 How might taking a thought captive (especially a negative one) be a pathway to finding strength in the Lord as David did?
- 5. What are some specific ways you can do that?

- 6. Read Romans 8:5-6. What does this passage teach about the workings of your mind? What would it look like to have your mind set more often on the desires of the Spirit?
- Knowing God's Word helps us fight negativity. Share any of your favorite verses or stories from Scripture that encourage you.
- 8. Read Philippians 4:8. You have power over your thoughts. Talk about ways you can, with God's help, control what you think about this week. How could this change your life?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray together: God, by Your power, I take every thought captive and make it obedient to the truth of Christ. Because You are good, I choose to think on what's good, right, true, helpful, and worthy of praise. As I trust in You, Your peace will guard my heart, soul, and mind.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our college students who will be graduating this month and heading forward into their lives as young adults- that they would be grounded in their faith in Christ and follow His lead on their journey.

Memory Verse:

"WE DEMOLISH ARGUMENTS
AND EVERY PRETENSION THAT
SETS ITSELF UP AGAINST THE
KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND WE
TAKE CAPTIVE EVERY THOUGHT
TO MAKE IT OBEDIENT TO
CHRIST."
2 CORINTHIANS

10:5



WEEK 6 Healing from Trauma

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

How did your parents/guardians deal with your boo boos when you were a kid?

Big Idea:

The wounds you can't see can hurt as much as the ones that you can see, and sometimes they even take longer to heal.

Key Scriptures: 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8

"We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself."

2 CORINTHIANS 11:23-28

"Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and

again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food: I have been cold and naked. Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches."

2 CORINTHIANS 12:7-10

"Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But [God] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ... That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

PSALM 34:18

"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

"Praise be to ... the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God."

ROMANS 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Discussion:

Trauma is a response to a deeply disturbing or distressing event, whether it's one time or ongoing. And trauma leaves

deep wounds in its wakemany that you can't see. When someone experiences physical trauma, it's easy to the wounds; but some kinds of trauma inflicted on a person leaves wounds that are seemingly invisible. That is, until that person is no longer able to hide the deep inner pain that plagues them.

- 1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:8, 11.23-28 and 12.78-10 In this week's message, we learned there are 3 types of trauma: acute: a response from a one-time traumatic event, chronic: a long-term response from prolonged or repeated events, and complex: a response to multiple and ongoing events. Discuss what kinds of trauma that the apostle Paul experienced and what categories they might have fallen into.
- 2. Share your experience with any of these types of trauma and how you have or are coping with them.
- 3. In the Corinthian passages, how do you see Paul deal with his trauma?
- 4. Read Psalm 34:18. How could God's care and grace bring comfort to you in the midst of your own trauma, whether current or past?

- 5. "Getting over" a hurt is different than truly healing. Share about a time when you experienced healing. How did you lean into God during that healing?
- 6. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Is there a trauma or hurt that you need receive comfort for by processing with trusted people? Consider sharing that hurt with your group so you can pray for healing together.
- 7. Read Romans 8:28. Ultimately, God can use any wounds that you experience for, not only your good, but to also help and encourage others. How might you trust Him to work in and through you to do so?

Wrapping It Up:

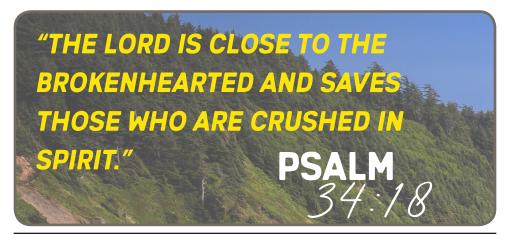
Recognize that there are some wounds so deep and painful that professional counseling might be in order. If you find in the midst of your conversations together that one or more of you may need to take a step toward that, we have great counseling options we can recommend. Just reach out to:

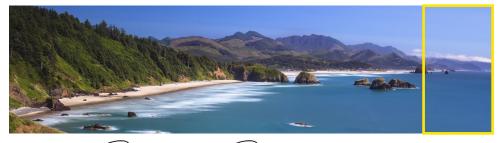
Laurie (laurievc@sunnybrookchurch.org) or BJ (bjvk@sunnybrookchurch.org)

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our Hope Center and Walk with Me guests, as many are in the situations they are in due to trauma in their lives.

Memory Verse:





WEEK 7 Beating Burnout

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Share your experience with the most tired you have ever been.

Big Idea:

Sometimes the most spiritual thing you can do is rest.

Key Scriptures: 1 KINGS 19:3-5

"Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep..."

1 KINGS 19:7-8

"The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank."

MATTHEW 11:28-30 MSG

"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Discussion:

 In this week's message we learned that stress is generally short-lived and related to a temporary project or event, and that

- burnout is chronic stress that feels never-ending.
- Share an instance from your own life of each of these.
- 3. Read 1 Kings 19:3-5, 7-8. Do you believe Elijah was experiencing stress or burnout in this situation? (if you're unsure of what had happened beforehand, read 1 Kings 18:16-19:10)
- 4. What remedy did Elijah take, under the direction of God, to alleviate his burnout?
- 5. Talk about a time when you experienced burnout in any area of your life. What was that like, and how did you find relief and hope?
- 6. Read Matthew 11:28-30. Is there currently an area in your life where you feel close to burnout? How might you practically respond to Jesus' invitation?
- 7. What changes might you make to, like Elijah, rest and practice self-care this week?

Wrapping It Up:

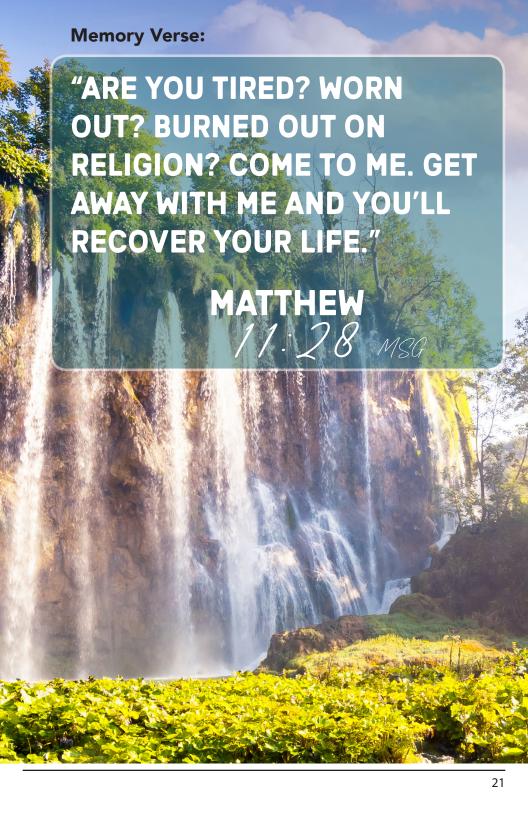
Here's a quick assessment you can take to determine if you might be experiencing burnout. If you find yourself responding positively to more than half of the statements, you may need to practice some self-care in this area. Check out our website for

practical tools and resources.

- I feel run down and drained of physical or emotional energy.
- I have negative thoughts about my life and/or my job.
- I am harder and less sympathetic with people than perhaps they deserve.
- I am easily irritated by small problems, or by my family or co-workers.
- I feel misunderstood or unappreciated by others.
- I feel that I have no one to talk to.
- I feel that I do not have time to do many of the things that are important to me.
- I feel under an unpleasant level of pressure to succeed.

Prayer Focus:

Pray for our partners at Liberty Elementary School – their teachers and staff – that they would be able to experience a season of refreshing and renewal this summer before embarking on a new school year in the Fall.



Top Tips for Leading a Small Group

- 1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
- 2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place? Review and sign a group agreement.
- 3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
- 4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
- 5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
- 6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
- 7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
- 8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
- 9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
- 10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that ea attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.
Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group i their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.
OUR EXPECTATIONS
Refreshments/mealtimes
Childcare
When we will meet (day of week)
Where we will meet (place)
We will begin at (time) and end at
• We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
Our primary worship service time will be
Date of this agreement
Date we will review this agreement again
Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study

PEACE mind



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