



Table Group Discussion Questions

Series: Words We Thought We Knew

Title: "Hope" on July 5, 2026

Start Here (5 minutes)

1. Go around the table and finish this sentence without overthinking it: *"Right now, the thing I'm most hoping for is..."* Don't explain it or defend it. Just name it. You'll come back to it at the end.

Getting to Know Each Other (10 minutes)

2. Are you more of an optimist or a realist — and does the person who knows you best agree with your answer? What's a story that proves it?

Getting Into the Word (20 minutes)

Read together: **Romans 5:1–5** and **Romans 8:28, 38–39**

The sermon described three foundations we naturally build hope on — our **feelings** (optimism), our **strategy** (if I plan well enough, it'll work out), and **manifesting** (if I want it badly enough, I can speak it into existence). All three are powered by you.

3. Where do you tend to put your hope when things get hard — feelings, strategy, or something else? What does it look like when that foundation gives way?

Romans 5:3–4 says trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope. That's a chain — and it only works if you stay in it.

4. Think about a difficulty you've been through that you can look back on now. Is there any evidence that it produced something in you that you couldn't have gotten any other way? What did it cost you to stay in it rather than escape it?

The sermon said Christian hope can say two things at the same time:

"It should not be this way" —and— "It will not always be this way"

5. Which of those two is harder for you to say right now — and why? Is there something in your life where you've been able to say the first but not yet the second?

The biosphere trees grew fast and tall in a controlled environment with no wind — and then collapsed under their own weight because their root systems were too shallow. The resistance they were missing was the very thing they needed.

6. What's the wind in your life right now — the resistance you're most tempted to escape? What might it be building in you that a comfortable season couldn't?

Going Deeper with Each Other (20 minutes)

The sermon gave us a **now what**: *"Instead of asking God to remove the circumstance, ask him what he's building in you through it. Then open your hands and say: 'Holy Spirit, I can't carry this alone. Carry me.'"*

7. Take a minute and try that out loud with the group. Name one circumstance you're in the middle of right now and ask the question out loud: *"God, what are you building in me through this?"* You don't have to have an answer. Just ask it.

The Lord of the Rings illustration said there are moments in the journey where Frodo literally cannot take another step — and it's Sam who carries him saying, *"I can't carry the ring for you, but I can carry you."*

8. Who has been a "Sam" for you in a hard season — someone who couldn't take the weight from you but stayed and carried you anyway? And is there anyone in your life right now who might need you to be that for them? **ACTION BONUS:** Write a thank you card to the person(s) that carried you in that season.

Romans 8:38–39 is one of the most sweeping promises in all of Scripture — nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God. Nothing. Not failure, not doubt, not circumstance, not the worst thing you've done or the worst thing that's been done to you.

9. Is there anything in your life right now where that promise feels hard to believe? Name it if you can. Let the group sit with it rather than trying to fix it.

Coming Back to Where You Started (10 minutes)

Go back to what you said at the beginning — the thing you're most hoping for right now.

10. Has anything shifted in how you're holding that hope after this conversation? Is it the same hope, or does it feel different now?

Pray for Each Other (10 minutes)

Don't close with a general prayer. Instead, go around the table and let each person share one specific thing they want the group to pray for — not a vague "pray for my week" but something real. Then pray for each person by name, out loud, before you leave.

If the group is ready for it, try praying Romans 5:5 over each person specifically:

"Holy Spirit, pour out the love of God into [name]'s heart. Give them what they need to keep going."

One Thing to Carry Into the Week

The **"now what"** from the sermon was simple: when the weight feels too heavy this week, instead of asking God to remove it, open your hands and say — *"Holy Spirit, I can't carry this alone. Carry me."*

Try it at least once before the group meets again. Come back and tell someone what happened.