

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jan 11

- Sharon talked about how, when something feels unsafe, our instinct is to layer up—not just physically, but emotionally and spiritually.
 - When Sharon talked about “layering up,” what stood out to you or resonated right away?
 - In what context do people tend to “layer up” most commonly?
 - What kinds of emotional or spiritual “layers” do people tend to put on when they feel unsafe?
 - Why do you think those layers are so effective, or appealing, at first?
 - **Go Deeper:** Sharon said that what we think is protecting us can actually numb us—keeping love, joy, and belonging at a distance. Have you ever noticed a time when a layer that once helped you survive later made it harder to feel close to God or others?
- Sharon emphasized that God is not interested in our false self but wants to meet the real us.
 - Sharon talked about the difference between our “false self” and our real self. How would you describe that distinction in your own words?
 - What makes it difficult or risky for people to show up honestly with God or in Christian community?
 - What characterizes environments that help make honesty feel safer?
- Using the story of Eustace the dragon from C.S. Lewis' *The Voyage of The Dawn Treader*, Sharon described how shame keeps us stuck in the exhausting loop of “try harder, do better, fix yourself.”
 - What part of the Eustace story stuck with you most?
 - Why do you think stories like that resonate so deeply with people?
 - Why is self-effort often more appealing—or familiar—than receiving grace?
 - **Go Deeper:** How have you personally experienced the limits of self-effort in your spiritual life?
- Sharon made the distinction that nearness without acknowledgment is only proximity.
- Sharon said, “Nearness without acknowledgment is only proximity.” What do you think she meant by that?
- What are some ways people can be around God without really engaging God?
- What might acknowledgment look like in everyday rhythms—not adding more activity, but paying attention?
- How do prayer and fasting help shift us from proximity to awareness?
- Sharon ended with the image of the birds that sing before the dawn—creatures with greater vision who aren’t afraid to make their presence known.
 - What emotions did Sharon’s image of the birds singing before dawn stir in you?
 - Why do you think hope often shows up before circumstances change?
 - If nearness to God truly sharpens our vision, what does quiet confidence rooted in God look like in uncertain seasons?
 - Where have you seen people embody hope even when things weren’t resolved yet?
 - **Go Deeper:** Where might God be inviting you to live with that kind of hopeful presence right now?