



# COMMUNITY GROUPS

SANTA CRUZ BIBLE CHURCH

## Going Further: Learning to Walk In the Way of Jesus God is Our Shepherd March 29, 2020

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### Passages

- Primary passage: Psalm 23

### Questions

- Opener:
  - How are you feeling this week? What do you need right now? (See Needs Inventory in Additional Resources below)
  - Have you ever been to see sheep in real life? What was that experience like?
- Share Experience:
  - In Psalm 23, there are at least 12 things that God does on behalf of his sheep (provides, leads, restores, etc). Can you recount a time recently where you experienced God doing at least one of these actions in your life?
  - Does the idea of being compared to a sheep give you comfort or make you bristle? Why?
  - Right now in your life, do you experience God has a loving and good shepherd or do you experience Him as something else? What might that be? Why?
  - How has God shepherded you in the past? How is God shepherding you now?
  - Saying “the Lord is my shepherd” is a declaration of both dependence and surrender. What does it look like to surrender to the Good Shepherd in your life right now?
- Dig Into:
  - Why do you think vs. 3 of Psalm 23 says that God “leads me in right paths *for his name’s sake*.”? What could this mean?
  - When the world looks at the church which is the visible, tangible body of Christ in the world, do you think they see this vision of God that Psalm 23 gives us? Why or why not?
  - How is it possible to have the kind of experience of God and confidence in God that David had?

### **Creative Ideas**

- Find a place locally where sheep or goats or even cows are grazing in green spring fields. Take a walk there (practicing safe physical distancing of course!) and watch the animals graze in the fields for at least 10 minutes. Afterwards, journal about how what you saw sheds light on Psalm 23 and how God is our Good Shepherd.
- Listen to the song “House of God Forever” by Jon Foreman which is a musical adaptation of Psalm 23. Listening to the Psalm in this way, what new insights or emotions stir in you?

### **Practices**

- The circumstances of our lives often show us the way God is shepherding us. In this time of Corona Virus, God is shepherding us even now. Every day this week, ask yourself three questions to pay attention to how God is working in your life in this season:
  1. What has Corona Virus taken from me? (What do I need to grieve the loss of?)
  2. What has Corona Virus left the same?
  3. What gifts has Corona Virus already brought to my life?
- Check in with people from your *Go Love Cards* and your neighbors (especially those who are elderly or prone to illness). Let them know you’re thinking of them/praying for them. See if there’s any tangible needs that you can safely meet for them.

### **Additional Resources**

- The questions at the end are fantastic! <https://timchester.wordpress.com/2016/03/21/following-up-the-sermon-in-small-groups/>
- Needs Inventory - <https://www.cnvc.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/CNVC-needs-inventory.pdf>
- Song: “House of God Forever” by Jon Foreman - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtDXHgTi-5s>

## How to use this Walking in the Way Guide

1. It's important to know that there's more material here than any one group can cover in one night. Please DO NOT try to get through every scripture passage, question, and creative idea. That is a recipe for discouragement and burnout!
2. Do use this guide as a way to spark some discussion following from last Sunday's message. As the Community Group Leader, you know your group the best. Select which elements from this guide would be most helpful and relevant to your group!
3. **Scripture:** We will always give two or more passages of scripture that are relevant to the topic from Sunday's sermon. Ideally select one passage and stay there. Use only two at the most. You may want to have someone read the passage out loud and then work through the questions from the *5 Questions to Ask When Reading Your Bible* guide below. This is a great resource to print out and give to every member of your Community Group to help guide their own Bible reading at home!
4. **Questions:** There are more questions here than you'll likely be able to get through in one night. Select some questions you think might resonate with your group and throw questions to the group for discussion until one really takes off! You know a good discussion is happening when group members are interacting with and responding to what each other is saying and not just what is coming from you as the group leader!
5. **Creative Ideas:** If you feel it will help your group, select one of these creative ideas to help your group process and interact with the theme for this week. Feel free to add in your own creative ideas as well!!
6. **Practices:** This is how we grow in grace! Practices are what move a good discussion from merely interesting to life transforming. These sample practices are given to help you and the group live into the reality that was talked about on Sunday and that you interacted with in Scripture this week. **Choose one or (at most) two practices that you as a group will commit to doing this next week to live into God's truth.** As you come back next week, debrief how those practices went the previous week!
7. **Sample Schedule:** Here's a sample timeline for how to budget your time for a Community Group meeting. Keep in mind, this is a suggestion, not a rule to follow. **Do what works best for your community!**
  - **Arrival:** Catching up and Snacks - 15 min
  - **Intro:** See how everyone's doing. Maybe throw out an icebreaker question. As the group gets more comfortable, you can use this time to debrief the previous week's practice. - 10 min
  - **Scripture:** Dig into one passage from scripture using the 5 Questions (See Below) - 25 min
  - **Discussion** - 20 min
  - **Closing:** Decide on which practice(s) you'll commit to this week. Spend time praying for each other and those you sense God is sending you to - 10 min

## **5 Questions To Ask When Reading Your Bible - Worksheet**

Whether you're a seminary professor or you've just recently picked up a Bible for the first time, these five questions can help you engage with Scripture. Try using it by yourself or with a group of people to read, understand and live out the Bible.

### **Question 1: What is going on in the passage?**

- What's happening here?
- Who are the main characters?
- Very simply, *what is*?

### **Question 2: What do I like about the passage?**

- What parts of this passage/story encourage me?
- What inspires, pleases or excites me based on what I've read?
- Why?

### **Question 3: What disturbs or startles me about the passage?**

- What is it about this passage that reveals truth that may be hard to accept?
- What disturbs me or jolts, confronts or even offends me in my understanding of God, His Son, the world or my life?
- Why don't I like that?

### **Question 4: What does this say about the nature of God and/or the character of Jesus?**

- What does this passage say about who God actually is?
- What does this say about the essence of his nature?
- What can I see about the character of Jesus (his patience, holiness, compassion, righteousness, etc)?

### **Question 5: What will I do with what I just learned in the next seven days?**

- How will we respond to what we've just read?
- What will I do with what I just learned?
- How do I make sure that this wasn't just intellectual ascent? How do I put this into practice?