

Community Group

Week of December 18

John 11:1-44

Today's big idea: We might have unfulfilled expectations in our lives but God is able to work his purpose in us.

- Share with the group a surprise gift that you received for Christmas. Do you have to figure out what you are getting or do you like the surprise?
- Unwrap the Community Group Guidelines together.

Bible Study

- Someone pray that God would help us hear from him.
- Use the Bible Storytelling technique to tell the story of the death of Lazarus.
- Retell the story together as a group.
- Read the story from John 11:1-44 in the Bible.
- What were Martha and Mary expecting Jesus to do when they sent for him?
- What did Jesus do that fulfilled their expectations and what did Jesus do that was unexpected?
- What were the variety of responses displayed in light of what Jesus did and didn't do?

Going Deeper

- What has been unexpected in your life? Maybe something unexpectedly happened to you or maybe you had expectations when you were younger that weren't fulfilled as you anticipated.
- How do the responses of others impact how you feel about those unfulfilled expectations?
- How have you seen God at work in those unfulfilled expectations and how do you think God might want to work in them still?
- Close your time together by sharing prayer requests and praying for each other.



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COMMUNITY GROUP GUIDELINES

Confidentiality

Keeping things that are shared in the group confidential builds trust and shows value to the person. Confidentiality can prevent gossip that only values the story; Jesus always valued the person above their story or their sin.

Don't Rescue & Don't Fix

When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful there can be a tendency to try and make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people. Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they will ask for it. You may want to take time later to ask if you can offer some advice.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they are sharing. Don't have side conversations. Trust is built in the moments when everyone feels like they are being listened to and heard by the entire group. Treat others in the group as you would want to be treated.

Use Humor Responsibly

Fun is an essential part of Small Groups; however, when meeting in the Biblical Storytelling time keep sarcastic comments, jokes and laughter to a minimum to allow for an atmosphere of authenticity and vulnerability.

Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Encourage everyone to participate in group discussions.

Use "I" Statements

During small group, we want to hear your personal thoughts and perspectives. Using "I" statements to answer discussion questions allows you to speak for yourself rather than generalizing by using terms such as "them", "the church", "us" or "we".

Fight for Relationship

Relationships reaches a whole new level when conflict is resolved in a healthy manner. When conflict or sin issues arise between group members, commit to fight for the relationship and discuss the struggle with the person you are in conflict with or seek wise advice.