

CITYGROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



Summer 2018 Week 3 – Psalm 23

#CityGroupsTally

Week of June 17, 2018

REMINDERS for leaders:

Here's a few reminders before you get going: (Welcome back leaders!)

-  **VIDEO:** Each week we will have a video for you to show at your group meeting.
- **Find an Apprentice or Co-Leader.** Be ready to: Replace Yourself & Multiply. My challenge for EVERY group leader is to find someone you can teach about leading a group. Ever since Jesus, the gospel has spread and churches have grown by individuals teaching others what they know. This will also free you up as you hand away responsibility.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. **Equipping Class:** (Sunday 6/ 24/18 from 5-6:30pm) Bring your City Group to our first ever discipleship class offered to the whole church. Multiple topics covered each night. Sign up online!
2. **Connect 201 & Baptisms:** (Sunday 6/24/18) Our June baptisms and Connect 201 (membership class) are coming up. Interested in becoming a member or getting baptized? Sign up online!

BIG IDEA(s):

This might be the most popular and famous Psalm of all time. It is known as the 'Shepherd Psalm' and was written by David; who grew up as a shepherd and ended up shepherding Israel as their king. David knows that we sheep are always following someone. The question is who are we really following each day and how can we Join Jesus on His mission to seek and save the lost.

PRAY: Ask the Lord to lead your group meeting, speak through the Scriptures and guiding conversations.

READ: Psalm 23

HEAD (20 minutes)



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO

1) Did anyone here grow up on a farm? What do you know about sheep? Why do they need a shepherd? (Note, David grew up as a shepherd boy before he became king of Israel)

2) What are some of things the Shepherd does for the sheep in this Psalm? (He provides rest, refreshes the soul, guides on the right paths, protects, comforts, anoints, overflows and provides a house to live in with the Shepherd forever.)

- **Which of those things, do you want God to do for you most in life right now?**

3) Where do you see Jesus in this Psalm? (See John 10:11)

- **How is Jesus our Shepherd?**
- **What is significant about Jesus becoming a sheep? (See John 1:29)** (Jesus is the only Shepherd who knows what it's like to be a sheep. The incarnation means that Jesus became one of us, and was the Lamb that was slaughtered to save us!)

HEART: (15 minutes)

1) What kind of 'valley of the shadow of death' have experienced recently?

- **How could verse 1 help you when feeling afraid or disappointed? (v. 1)**
- **How has God rescued you or comforted you in this dark valley? (v. 4) Where did you see his grace? His timing? His power?**

2) In verse 5, notice how God throws a party right in the middle of the battlefield.

What are some ways you've seen God do this in your life? (He does not wait for us to dig ourselves out of the dark valley, but instead meets us right in the worst of it.)

HANDS (15 Minutes):

1) Is Jesus your Shepherd? (John 10:26-30) How do you know?

- **What is one area of life where you are struggling to follow Jesus?** (Screen time, finances, use of time, career, family life, evangelism, relationships etc.)
- **What do you need to do (or stop doing) to start following Jesus fully as your Shepherd?**

2) Jesus left the 99 sheep to go find the lost one. (Matt. 18:12) Who is your lost 'one'? Who could you reach out to this week with gospel intentionality? How will you do it?

Pray: Take a few moments to share prayer requests and pray for one another and your lost friends.

Devotional: (Written by City Church member & City Group Leader Caitlin Tidwell)

Psalm 23 Devotional

Today we will spend some time reflecting on Psalm 23. I have turned to this psalm during many hard seasons in my life, including the loss of my husband. It seems that there is always something more to glean from it.

"The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack."

Other translations say "I shall not want" but I like how the HCSB version says "there is nothing I lack." The imagery of God as a shepherd is a familiar motif in the Bible and it shows how God cares for His people. This psalm starts with the great promise of His provision for everything we need.

Are you struggling with something right now? Have you asked God for what you need? Take a few minutes and talk to God about it. Earlier this week I was having a bad day where nothing was going right. I was stressed and frustrated and beating myself up about everything instead of taking it to God. This psalm had been on my mind in preparation for this devotional so on my lunch break I went to a quiet place and I prayed this psalm over my situation. Try it for yourself and see what God does. The Lord is your shepherd and He will give you what you need so that there is nothing you lack. But be prepared as Spurgeon reminds us, "He often answers in an unexpected manner. Many of God's answers come in black-edged envelopes. Yet remember this, they will come."

Without hesitation I can tell you that I have never felt such peace as during the most painful time in my life when I cried out for mercy. Likewise, I have never felt such comfort as during a season of sorrow when my Lord, my Shepherd met every need and withheld no good thing (Psalm 84:2). Even earlier this week, God ministered to me again with this same psalm when I was just having a really bad day. The Lord is my shepherd, so there is nothing I lack.

*"He lets me lie down in green pastures;
He leads me beside quiet waters.
He renews my life;
He leads me along the right paths
for His name's sake"*

Rest. Nourishment. Guidance. Restoration. We yearn for these things but there are so many false paths that threaten to lead us astray. The Lord is your shepherd and only in Christ do we find rest, nourishment and restoration as God draws us closer to himself.

*"Even when I go through the darkest valley,
I fear no danger,
for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff — they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies;
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
Only goodness and faithful love will pursue me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord as long as I live."*

As of late, a song called *Hills and Valleys* by Tauren Wells has resonated with me, reminding me of how God was with me in the deepest valleys and darkest times of my life and how abundantly He pours out grace and mercy in my life every day. The same God that met me in the dark valley will be with you and I forever in His glorious light. That is ultimately where our good Shepherd is leading us.