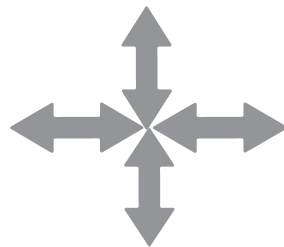




GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of June 7th

Friends, we thought COVID-19 was going to be the major affliction of 2020, but events of the past week have added another layer of suffering to our communities and nation. Not only have we been stressed by physical distancing, we have been rocked by racial injustice and violent responses to that injustice. Both of these crises call for responses from Christ's people out of love for neighbor. This is where we can truly be the church, as we act in love for the well-being and dignity of our neighbors.

Now is the time to become the greatest artist you have ever been. Create ways to stay relationally and spiritually tethered to your core circle. We need each other. We are gifts to one another! Make phone calls; text photographs; set up video gatherings. Consider ways in which each of us and all of us together can contribute to reconciliation. Together, we are the hands and feet of Christ to one another and this city!



UP: growing in relationship with God

IN: growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

OUT: growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission.

Sermon: I've Come to Believe: God loves Me (Romans 5:1-11)

Time of Prayer:

Together, begin with prayer. Lift up this present hour to the Lord. Pray for the Holy Spirit to guide and guard your time together. Pray that God will use this time to further direct your heart to Him, to walk in all His ways. Pray that your time together results in the further inbreaking of the Kingdom of Heaven, which heals our hearts and brings salvation ever closer to the yet-believing community around us as we move toward our neighbors in the love and strength of Christ.



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Together as a group, read aloud Romans 5:1-11.

Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note any words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Three times Paul uses the phrase “when/while we were...” (verses 6, 8, 10) What are the three conditions he describes? How would you describe your experiences with those conditions?
2. When we were those things, what did Jesus do for us and what does that tell us about God’s love for us?
3. Pastor Tim, at the beginning of his sermon describes how Jonathan Edwards, the great colonial preacher, saw evidence of God’s love in everything. As you look around your life — your surroundings, the people around you, your circumstances — how do you experience God’s love?



Out: Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

1. As Pastor Tim noted at the beginning of his sermon, we have seen hatred and conflict all across our nation this past week. With the stresses of dealing with COVID-19, this social rupturing has driven many to the point of hopelessness and despair. Yet in Romans 5:1-11 we read of God’s great reconciling love which gives us peace with Him. We also learn that the Holy Spirit pours out His love into our hearts... overflowing love. If we have been so loved and so filled with love what can our response be in this wrenching conflict? How might what God has done for us be a model for reconciling with enemies?



IN: Connect with Each Other

COVID-19: Spend time connecting with your core circle on how you are doing.

Racial Unrest: Look for ways to open up a discussion about responses to racial division. Pray together.