



PLEASANT HILLS
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Week of Sunday, January 24

*Questions with asterisks are meant to be answered by everyone in the group.
(typically, the icebreaker question and the final question of the evening)*

Do not feel pressure to answer every question. Leave time for prayer at the end of your time together.

Icebreaker

****What is your dream job?***

Questions for the sermon series, *In the Bleak Midwinter*

Read this passage to provide the context for the discussion questions that follow.

Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, Lord," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the Lord came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"¹

More Discussion Questions on Next Page

¹ 1 Kings 19:1-9

1. If you were worshiping with Pleasant Hills Church in the Fall, what aspects of Elijah's story are similar to Jonah's story? What are a few key differences that you can name?
(a quick scan of the book of Jonah isn't cheating)
2. Sometimes, we read about individuals in the Bible and think, "I could never be that strong or that faithful." How does the honesty in this passage about Elijah bring hope for our own faith journey?
3. When Elijah is at his breaking point, he cries out, "I have had enough, Lord."
These days, we hear this phrase in a whimsical way quite often: "I have had enough of...."
Yet, speaking honestly, can you remember a particularly difficult, more serious moment when you could personally relate to Elijah's experience?
4. The angel tells Elijah, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." Pastor Kevin said, "The call to follow Christ and to live like him in this increasingly-broken world is a *grand* calling. It is far more than you and I can do in our own strength."
 - a. How does this challenge popular clichés like, "God will never give you more than you can handle?"²
 - b. What might some of God's purposes be for calling us to endure circumstances that stretch us beyond our own strength?
5. In his message about idolatry, Pastor Mark talked about bringing a better balance between the amount of time we spend watching the news or scanning social media and the amount of time we spend with our Creator. In this week's message about anxiety, Pastor Kevin talked about these same concepts as forms of meditation that potentially lead to (great) anxiety.
 - a. How would you describe your relationship with these forms of media or social-media?
 - b. How do these forms of communication lead to healthy outcomes in your life?
 - c. How do these forms of communication lead to *unhealthy* outcomes in your life?
6. If it's not already part of your daily routine, are you willing to commit to reading Scripture and praying more consistently?
 - a. What changes in your daily routine would need to take place for this to happen?
 - b. What questions, doubts, or hesitations do you have about developing these disciplines?

CHALLENGE FOR THE WEEK:

Use the prayer that combined Psalm 131:1 with Philippians 4:8 twice each day, meditating on it each morning and evening, until we meet again.

Lord, my heart is not proud. My eyes are not lifted too high. I do not concern myself with matters too great or too wonderful for me. But, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- I will think about these things.

² This is an unfortunate paraphrase of 1 Corinthians 10:13, which speaks specifically about temptation -- not suffering.