



SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS, 2023 “Prepare Disciples”

OPENING DISCUSSION

Highs and Lows, >10 minutes

In one or two sentences, have each group member share one good moment and one difficult moment from the past week.

Mission and Service Opportunities to Consider

East End Cooperative Ministry Meal Prep and Service: **Friday, February 10.** (Contact Lindsey Mitko)

- Cook and/or serve meals to residents. Detailed instructions provided. All ages welcome!
- Commitment: Meet at PHC at 4:40pm, home by 8:00pm. Option to eat with residents.

The Blessing Board “Day of Blessing”: **Saturday, February 25.** (Email mission@pleasanthillschurch.com)

- Assist people as they choose used furniture for their new residence or help pack that furniture into moving vehicles. If the Blessing Board needs volunteers to serve! Give it a try.
- Commitment: Meet at TBB from 9:00am-1:00pm. Donuts and coffee provided.

READING AND MEDITATING ON GOD’S WORD

This is the final passage of the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus, now resurrected from the dead, meets with his disciples on a mountaintop in Galilee. There, he clarifies their mission as his disciples. This passage is known as *The Great Commission*. To *commission* someone is to grant them the authority to carry out a particular task or responsibility— a mission. For Christians, this mission did not stop with the twelve disciples. Instead, this mission is passed from one generation of Christians to another.

Begin this time of your small group meeting with thirty seconds of silent prayer. At the end of thirty seconds, have someone from your group ask God to bless your time together. Then, have another person read the passage on the next page.

MATTHEW 28:16-20

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

1. Read the quote from Jesus again pausing at each period and comma. Spend a minute or two on each component. Discuss the significance of this part of the great commission for you, Jesus' disciples.

The second phrase of the Pleasant Hills Church mission statement is "**Prepare Disciples.**"

On Sunday, Pastor Mark said it is important to (1) acknowledge the problems in our context, (2) personally grow as disciples, and (3) disciple the generation coming after you.

2. *Acknowledge the problems in our context:*
 - a. Mainline Protestants have one of the lowest retention rates of any major religious tradition. Only 25% of those raised in the faith continue to identify with it as adults.
 - b. Today, the PCUSA's membership is roughly 25% of what it was in 1965.
 - c. Half of the PCUSA churches have 35 or less attenders.
 - d. On average, 1/3 of the members in a Presbyterian church are over the age of 71.

When you read or hear these kinds of statistics, what thoughts or feelings stir within you?

3. *Personally grow as disciples:* how does our own health and growth as disciples impact our ability to make disciples?
 - a. How are you making efforts to grow as a disciple of Jesus?
 - b. Or, how will you begin taking more seriously this process of growing as a disciple?
4. *Disciple the next generation:* what are some of the good results that can occur when each generation within our church focuses on making disciples of the next generation?
 - a. In very practical terms, what does this look like for you?
 - b. Who will you commit to discipling?

Personal Discipline for the Week:

Prayerfully consider how God is leading you to grow as a disciple, and ask God to lead you to a person (or group of people) with whom you can develop a relationship in which you fulfill Jesus' mission for your life— to make disciples.

CLOSING PRAYER

Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Allow time for small group members to pray aloud.
Read Psalm 145:3-13 on the next page to open your prayer time.

PSALM 145:1-7

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.[b]
They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.