

## CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week #2 - When I'm Anxious



### GETTING STARTED

Spend some time checking in with each other. Any highs and lows since the last time you met?

Share a harmless prank you've seen or experienced—or something that looked 'fine on the outside' but wasn't.

### THIS WEEK'S THEME

Why do you think it's so hard to admit when we're not okay, especially in places like church?

The message warns about two "ditches": over-spiritualizing or over-medicalizing anxiety. Have you seen either in your own life or others'?

Where have you seen it to be true that anxiety is on the rise? Has anxiety affected you or your family? If you're comfortable, share an anxious thought or situation you've been wrestling with lately?

Read Matthew 14:22-27 – What stands out to you in this story of Jesus calming the storm?

How does this passage connect to how anxiety feels in your life or in the lives of those you love?

Have you ever felt like the disciples—caught in a storm you didn't choose? What has helped you or others in your life manage anxiety in healthy ways? (e.g., faith, therapy, exercise, friendships, nature)

Hans said, "Jesus stands above the chaos." What does that mean to you personally?

How did you react during the message to the growing sound of the waves / storm, and then to the moment when the sound stopped?

## DIGGING DEEPER

*“This second story of the disciples at sea (see 8:23-27) is not so much a miracle as it is a story of faith. It is replete with Matthean motifs, including for the first time Peter’s emerging role as a representative of the disciples and thereby of the believing community. The ‘immediately’ of its opening verse pointedly joins it to the preceding story of the feeding of the five thousand, and in Matthew’s telling it becomes essentially a parable of faith. The disciples are at risk on the sea without their master who is alone in prayer. Finally, near morning, Jesus comes to them walking on the water, but in their fear they fail to recognize him. Jesus’ command for them to stop being afraid contains within it the revelatory ‘I Am.’ Peter responds with words of faith, ‘Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.’ At Jesus’ command to come, Peter indeed does walk on the water, but when he takes his eyes off Jesus, he begins to sink and cries out to the Lord for rescue. Jesus reaches out, takes him by hand, catches him up, and then chastises him for his ‘little faith.’*

*Twice Peter has addressed Jesus with words of faith, calling him ‘Lord.’ Trusting in Jesus’ command to ‘Come!’ he has walked on the water. When in peril he cries out to Jesus as ‘Savior,’ and even in the midst of his doubting he is rescued. Though Jesus chides Peter for his ‘little faith’ (a description that is essentially unique to Matthew’s gospel narrative), still, at the Lord’s touch, the wind ceases and the boat with the disciples is safe. All those in the boat respond in the only way appropriate for disciples: they worship Jesus as ‘Truly...the Son of God.’ The combined motifs of doubt and worship mirror the reaction of the disciples when they meet the resurrected Lord on the mountain (28:17). This combination and the fact that the word translated ‘doubt’ occurs only in these two places in Matthew emphasize the importance of this story as a parable and model of faith for Matthew’s community.”*

<https://enterthebible.org/passage/matthew-1422-33-jesus-and-peter-walks-on-the-water>

## PRAY

Ask how you can pray for each other this week. What prayer requests do you have?

God, you promise to be with us through everything. When our mental health struggles, or the mental health of our friends and loved ones, guide us to resources, care, and support. Lord in your mercy,

## TAKING IT HOME

What’s one small step you could take this week to “look outside yourself” when anxiety hits?