

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week #3 - Beating Burnout



GETTING STARTED

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

Would you say you're prone to stress, or are you generally a more relaxed person? Have you always been that way? Why or why not?

THIS WEEK'S THEME

Pastor Angie referred to this definition of stress: "Stress happens when the demands placed on you exceed the resources available to you." In what areas of your life do the "demands" most often exceed your "resources"?

What are the physical or emotional signals you personally feel when you're under too much stress?

Why do you think our culture rewards pushing through stress instead of addressing it?

Read 1 Kings 19:1-12. What do you notice in the story? How does God respond to Elijah? What does that say about God's care for us?

Have you had your "Welcome to Wisconsin" moment—when you realized you were not okay? If you're willing, share it with the group.

Pastor Angie suggested that we can combat burnout through rhythms of rest, acts of resistance, and investing in community.

What does meaningful rest look like for you, and what gets in the way of practicing it?

What lies do you need to resist (e.g., "I have to do it all," "I'm only valuable if I'm productive")?

Who can you lean on right now as someone who can invest in you? Who can you support?

What's one small, doable change you can make this week to rest, protest, or invest?

DIGGING DEEPER

First Kings continues the story where 2 Samuel left off. Chapters 1-2 complete the presentation of the reign of David and the succession of Solomon. Chapters 3-11 depict Solomon's glorious reign, highlighted by the construction of the Temple, but including his ultimate apostasy. Chapters 12-14 relate Jeroboam's rebellion, his censure by the prophets, and the resulting division of the nation into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah in 722 BCE. The rest of 1 Kings details the reigns of the divided monarchy, alternating between the North and the South, but with the bulk of the material considering the period of Israelite supremacy, especially under Omri and Ahab. This period also includes the abrupt appearance and compelling ministry of the prophet Elijah.

First Kings is a story of kings and prophets told for a purpose. Rather than chronicling the royal events as they happened, 1 Kings uses the history of the kings of Judah and Israel as a tool of education, warning, and comfort. The authors of 1 Kings attempt to explain the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE to those experiencing exile in Babylon. With these stories, the authors encourage a new national self-understanding. There are stories of the failure of Israel's kings and other power players. With their failure came deserved divine judgment, according to 1 Kings. But the tale also offers a story of God's unrelenting, loving commitment to God's people. Through divine words of hope, judgment, summons, and warning, God seeks to maintain the deep and meaningful covenantal relationship with God's people. We, too, need to hear that a patient and merciful God awaits our response, delights in our attention, and listens to our prayers.

The final event recorded in the books of Kings occurred in 561 BCE. Since the return from Babylon in 538 BCE is not recorded, one assumes that—as part of the Deuteronomistic History—1 Kings reached its final form sometime between these dates; that is, during the Babylonian exile or soon thereafter.

<https://enterthebible.org/courses/1-kings/lessons/summary-of-1-kings>

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

Create a “rest challenge” for yourself this week. Be intentional, and tell one person about it so you're held accountable.