

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week #2: "How to Grow Your Faith: Faith Practices"



GETTING STARTED

If you ran out of time last week, finish introductions or anything else around setting group norms and expectations.

Pastor Angie talked about her firstborn son being a daredevil child. If you're a parent, can you relate? If not your child, were you or your siblings the daredevil in the family? Tell a quick *daredevil* story, if you have one, to continue getting to know one another.

Have you ever placed trust in someone, knowing they would "catch" you, either literally or metaphorically? How did that experience shape your relationship with them?

THIS WEEK'S THEME

Pastor Angie suggests that faith is often described as a journey, which involves growth, movement, and sometimes struggle. Sometimes we expect it to be linear, with peaks and valleys along the way. Other times it's marked by powerful, life-changing moments. How would you describe your faith journey? Was it pre-determined (by your parents or grandparents), gradual, sudden, or a mixture? How do you relate to the idea that faith grows and changes over time?

God makes it abundantly clear that we can't get closer to God - God already chooses to be close to us by sending Jesus to the world. What do you make of the idea that God meets you right where you are, *and* yet God also refuses to leave you there?

Faith practices include, but are not limited to, generosity, prayer, worship, Bible study, and serving. Which have you tried? Which are you curious about?

Pastor Angie used the analogy of a plant when it comes to our faith. If she had left the plant in the original pot, it would become root bound and eventually quit growing. Have you ever felt "root bound" in your faith, and what steps did you take to grow or expand your understanding of God? How can you use faith practices as a way of "repotting" your own faith?

DIGGING DEEPER

Matthew 6:1-8

It would be easy to turn our spiritual practices into a performance. But Jesus warns us about religious hypocrisy.

Learn more here: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/warnings-about-religious-practices/>

How can we use our faith practices humbly yet also boldly?

Luke 17:1-6

All throughout the Bible people struggle with faith. Here, Jesus taught his disciples a hard lesson on how many times they should forgive their neighbors. They looked at Jesus thinking his teaching was impossible and they said to Jesus, The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

How do you relate to the desire for "more faith"? Is there a specific area in your life where you wish you had more confidence in God's ability to catch you when you jump?

Mark 9:14-29

In the book of Mark a man whose son has been possessed by a demon who heard about how Jesus had been healing people and he's desperate so he brings his son to Jesus. He's afraid he doesn't have enough faith, He's gotten my hopes up too many times.

When have you felt like you didn't have enough faith?

Psalms 139

Our modern day mindset leads us to believe that if we work hard enough, we can do or earn anything. However, the Psalmist insists that just like there is no place that we can hide from God, there is nothing we can do to get closer to God.

What makes this so difficult for us to accept?

PRAY

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

Wonderful God, you didn't make faith to be still. Guide us to ask questions, to put our faith into action, and to grow together. Amen.

TAKING IT HOME

What is one new faith practice you might try to help expand your faith and grow your confidence in God?