

## Leader's Corner

We desire for every small group to experience and own these 4 values:

### Seen

We create ways to notice and engage all people

### Safe

We cultivate communities of grace in order to produce authentic relationships

### Shaped

We train all people to become devoted disciples of Jesus

### Sent

We empower all disciples to make disciples

With these values in mind, the following is a guide to help each of us begin the journey towards healing and reconciling. Although this guide is created to help us maneuver our current surroundings, the hope is that it may also guide each of us in other areas of our life where we may be facing, have caused, or have experienced distress, conflict, harm, or even abuse.

This guide is also not meant to be the only resource. As you and your group experience this current reality, you may find the need for additional support or resources. If so, know that you are not alone. Please connect with trusted friends, your leader, the church staff and any of them can help you take a necessary next step.

Above all else, our hope rests and sits at the feet of Jesus. He is able. He is willing. He is true and sure . . . Especially when we are not or cannot.

#### As we begin, remember . . .

- The investigation report and subsequent diagnosis (Knowing the facts and detailed information) is the beginning of knowing what to heal. . . Will we trust that our Heavenly Father wants our healing and transformation even more than we do?
- The distress inside each of us varies after reading the report and trying to match it up with what we thought we knew. For all of us, this distress is like a river that has been stirred up after a strong storm. The storm has stirred up the river bottom and the water is no longer clear . . . It is best to first let the sediment settle. . . Will we take some time to settle our minds and hearts before “jumping” into the river?

## Let's Begin . . .

- **With Prayer:** The Holy Spirit is often described like wind that carries and directs us. Read out loud Isaiah 40:31. Then read it again slowly. Take some time to pray specific prayers of trust and guidance. You may even use the following prayer to start out,
  - Holy Spirit, we trust you. Help us to slow down, to wait, to hope expectantly, and the trust that you will renew us. We are (anxious, sad, mad, disappointed, wondering, etc.). Will you meet us here and shepherd and guide us forward?
- **With Truth:** Conflict (distress or any kind or form) is a natural part of relationships. If you are ever to experience authentic relationships, you are sure to also experience conflict of various kinds. Donald Palmer introduced five realities of conflict (Managing Conflict Creatively). First, conflict began with man's disobedience and fall, and it won't end until Jesus restores everything (Genesis 3, Revelation 21 & 22). Next, there are numerous stories throughout Scripture of people experiencing conflict (Job, Abraham, Moses, David, Peter, Paul, etc.). Jesus himself experienced and even started conflict. Our adversary (Satan) seeks to devour Jesus followers and the church in conflict. Finally, supernaturally, God sometimes allows conflict to be a central part of His will. So, it isn't a matter of if you experience conflict and more a matter of what to do when you experience conflict.
  - Take a few moments and read the following Scripture:
    - Ephesians 4:1-6
    - Galatians 5:13-18 (for more context try 5:7-25)
  - In response to Scripture, what reminders do we hear? You might say it this way, "I am encouraged or challenged when I hear \_\_\_\_\_."
  - What do we specifically need to be mindful of in our current situation?
  - How do these Scriptures instruct us to respond to our current situation?
  - When I think about our group and our relationships, what concerns me the most?
- **With Practice:** What are we (as a group or household) most willing to do? Think about values or even desired character. You may even want to use the following to craft some value/character statements.
  - "We do not \_\_\_\_\_. Instead, we are a people who \_\_\_\_\_."

## For Further Reflection . . .

- Before your next gathering as a group, take some time to personally reflect and answer the following questions:
  - As you notice the distress or conflict within you, what does it reveal about what you highly value?
  - How does this value contribute to peace in your relationships/community, or how does it diminish peace?
  - What do you most hope for our church in the future?