

Dig Deeper @Home – “Hope Restored”

Complement to lesson on 11/13/22 – “Turning to Hope”

ICE BREAKER – Questions to open dialogue and learn more about those gathered

1. When, if ever, have you fasted from food? Drink? Social media?
2. What was your incentive? Results? Would you do it again?

MEMORIZE – Joel 2: 12-13

“Yet even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

READ – Joel 1:13-20; 2:12-17

Questions to ponder/discuss:

1. What does the Holy Spirit draw your attention to as you read these verses?
 - a. What particular words or phrases is the Holy Spirit highlighting to you as you read?
 - b. Is anything repeated? Contrasted? Compared?
 - c. What are the verses revealing about God? About people? In light of these, what needs to change in your life?
2. Why was the locust plague meaningful, according to verses fifteen through twenty of chapter one? (Joel 1:15-20)
3. What is meant by the statement in 2:13 “rend your heart and not your garments?”
 - a. What is God calling for people to do and why?
 - b. What else should prompt them to return to God? (See Exodus 34:6-7; Nehemiah 9:16-17)
4. Joel twice calls for the people to declare a “holy fast and to call a sacred assembly” (1:14, 2:15)
 - a. What was the purpose of fasting in light of their circumstances and what are we to take from this?

EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY – Practice Fasting

A “fast” can be very helpful if you’re feeling spiritually depleted, if you want to seek better connection with God, if you are seeking God’s mind on a matter, or if you’re in trouble and need a breakthrough. If you have never fasted before start small by choosing not to eat a meal and instead spend that time in prayer seeking God’s presence and power in your life. Or you may choose to fast from food for a day from morning to sundown praying during the time you would normally be eating.

You can also choose to turn off the social media or television entertainment for a period of time and instead listen to worship music or give that time to reading God’s Word and listening to God as you pray. It may be helpful to have a journal to record what you hear God saying to you during this time.

And if you are in a group, share what you are hearing from God as you gather following a time of fasting. *“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”* (James 4:4)

SING (Suggested songs to sing. Use these, or any favorites of the gathered group, to worship Jesus!)

Yet Not I But Through Christ in me - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHJPw1Qioo>

O Come to the Altar - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VT_br9kJVNw

Lord, I Need You - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gS9e0nxHP-w>

Lord, I am fondly, earnestly longing – Mennonite Hymnal #585

PRAY

This is a time to gather around for prayer requests and to share how you have seen God at work. A time to hear where God is showing up in our lives and where we need Him to help us in our lives.

Sending prayer based on the series:

Holy Spirit, give me eyes to see the despair and difficulties of those around me, give me ears to hear your truth, and give me the voice to graciously speak into the lives of those around me where I live, work, study and play.