

Small Group Guidance for Navigating:

STRESS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

A variety of factors can cause stress on a normal day. Heading into the holidays, that stress is heightened and can be difficult. Your small group can do a lot to support friends who are struggling with stress during the holidays.

When group members mention stress, here are a few things you can do to support them.

- Thank the person for sharing and gently ask if they'd be willing to share a little more (if they didn't already) to see if there are any practical ways the group can help.
- Remember we are not fixers. We are listeners. Our listening shows we care and provides comfort. Reflect what you heard the group member share so they feel heard and understood and simply affirm with simple phrases such as, "That must be hard."
- Pray. Pray for wisdom as a leader in navigating the discussion and pray for your friend. Encourage the friend to lean into God and pray also.
- Point them to Truth:

Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually! - 1 Chronicles 16:11

It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed. - Deuteronomy 31:8

Nevertheless, I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. - Psalm 73:23

Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. - Matthew 6:34

- Remind them to take care of themselves. To take a walk, to find time to rest and focus on God, to do what fills and refreshes them. Especially when stress sets in, we need to dedicate even more time to getting filled up.
- Encourage group members to reach out and invite the friend to coffee, or simply reach out with a call or text to let them know you were thinking about them and praying for them. This reminds them they are not alone and that they have positive, healthy relationships.
- Invite them to participate in a daily devotional that relates to their situation. You can find many great subject-specific 'plans' on the YouVersion app. This will ensure they're spending time daily in the word with positive reminders to help them shift their outlook.
- If you think they'd be receptive to it, [CLICK HERE](#) for a great, practical article containing lots of tips for managing stress during the holidays.

Looking for More Support?

- Please feel free to reach out to the Groups Team to talk about it. Whether it be to help you find a good devotional to do with your group member, or for next steps, we're here for you.
- Consider making a prayer appointment at the Prayer Barn. Contact prayer@acfellowship.org
- Does your group member need more support? Direct your group member to our Pastoral Cares page: <https://www.acfellowship.org/cares/>
- [CLICK HERE](#) for tips on how to have a peaceful, restorative holiday season from our ACFcares Team! These tips are worth sharing with your whole group!