

**PRAYER: AWE & INTIMACY**  
**Discussion Guide 5, Week of Feb 10**

**For Small Groups:** Did you Meditate on Scripture last week? Share a verse that was meaningful to you.

**INTIMACY: CONVERSATION SERMON SUMMARY**

We can experience God's love and feel His presence in conversation with Him.

- 1. What is intimacy in prayer? It means to experience His love and feel His presence as you pray.** We can know Jesus as our Good Shepherd and hear his voice in a close personal relationship because the Holy Spirit is in us. (John 10:1-5, 11-16; 14:16-17, 16:13)
- 2. How do we hear God's voice? We hear God's voice in Scripture and through the Holy Spirit in us.** The Spirit's still small voice speaks through people, circumstances, conviction, thoughts, impressions, and in the distractions as our minds wander.
  - Some questions for meditating on Scripture: *What does this mean? What does it tell me about God? What difference does it make? How does it apply to me?*
  - Some questions as you listen for the Holy Spirit: *"What do you want to say to me?", "How do you see me?", or pray "Dear God, I want to feel your love and presence."*
- 3. Will you be open to prayer as conversation and listening for God's voice? God is already speaking.** Some ways to be open to prayer as conversation:
  - Read Scripture, pray, and pause
  - Listen for God's voice as you go through your day
  - Seek longer times of solitude and listening

**QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION**

1. How is Jesus a Good Shepherd to you? How do you picture the shepherd and sheep in John 10 and Psalm 23? How does that affect your desire for a deeper relationship with God?
2. What are some reasons people tend to feel guilty or ashamed about prayer? How does that make us avoid prayer? How can we change that?

3. In the sermon, Donna quoted Pastor Dave Hansen's *Long Wandering Prayer*:  
*Long wandering prayer uses the fact that our minds wander as an advantage to prayer rather than as a disadvantage ... We recognize that what we want to pray about may not be what God wants us to pray about. Our obsessive drive to control our minds in the presence of God, that is to pray about one thing or stick to one list, may be a form of hiding from God. In this kind of prayer we recognize the wandering mind as a precious resource for complex and startling dialogue with God.*

Talk about your experience with distractions and wandering in prayer. How do you usually think about that? How might it be an advantage? What do you think Hansen means when he says that some prayer "may be a form of hiding from God?"

4. Have you ever thought of prayer as a conversation, or about listening for God's voice, before? What's your reaction to these ideas? What's inviting?
  - Do you feel doubtful, or curious, or excited to try it? What questions or hesitations do you have about it?
  - Or do you already enjoy listening as you pray? If you do, share any experiences you are comfortable sharing.
5. Our challenge this week is to Listen for God's Voice. How do you think you will do it? What do you think will happen? What do you hope for in this challenge?
6. Close with a time of listening prayer. Read Psalm 23:1-3 together, then sit quietly for 3 min, and listen for God's voice. If you have any thoughts, impressions, ideas, images, or feelings - and if you feel comfortable talking about them - share them. Encourage each other as people share!