



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
For the sermon preached on
5/3/2020:
“Living Stones”
1 Peter 2:4-10

How to use the Study Guide During Our “Stay at Home” Online Group Meetings

Group life is even more critical during this incredible season. Over and over, group leaders are reporting that suddenly, there is a new hunger to connect, share, pray, and meditate on Scripture together and so we are making these guides available weekly and suggesting a new format during this season.

As you know, our Group Life’s vision is to “practice the way of Jesus.” And while Jesus never had to lead a Torah study over Zoom, he was strategic in his teaching ministry, and we want to be as well.

There are a number of differences between meeting in person and meeting online, ranging from the obvious to the subtle. One is, given our attention spans for online meetings, we want to encourage you to limit the length of your call between 45-60 minutes and we are calling this “Check-In Plus One.” Meaning, spend a few minutes checking in with your group and see if there are any new needs with them (or even amongst their neighbors). “The One” is to spend time in study. As our Stay at Home continues, our desire for meaningful content and interaction will grow. Given our new format, the study guides based on Sunday’s Sermon will be designed to be more application based (as opposed to unpacking the text with the Inductive Bible Study method). You might consider sharing the passage beforehand with your group in hopes that they might spend more time with the Scripture before the gathering.

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do in practicing the way of Jesus in community.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

For the Leader: “Check-In Plus One”

Welcome everyone to the Zoom call and outline the goal of this call being 45 minutes. Spend 15-20 minutes checking in with one another, then move into a time of prayer, and then spend some time discussing the application of the Scripture passage.

A “Check-in” question might be, “How are you doing, and is there anything new that has arisen in your life or in your neighborhood that we can pray about?”

For the Group:

As mentioned, throughout our Stay at Home quarantine, we have shortened our study, given the confinements and attention spans on Zoom calls. So these three questions are designed to be less inductive, and more practical. Let's get started.

This is Week 3 in our "What Now" series, and Pastor Bryan preached a message called "Living Stones" on the present and future of the church.

Q – Like the past few weeks, the passage for today's sermon comes from 1 Peter:

"As you come to him, the living Stone – rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him – you also, like living stones, are **being built into a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 2:4-5

This passage invites us to consider how God is at work in this really challenging season: what God is doing in Grace Chapel, what God is doing in his Church all over the world, and how God is forming his people for his purposes:

- What signs do you see that God is building our Grace Chapel community into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood during this pandemic?
- In what other ways have you seen God at work in this season?

Q – Toward the end of the sermon, Pastor Bryan named four ways the church is changing because of this pandemic: the church is becoming more prayerful, more adaptive, more outward, and more mobilized.

- What changes have you observed *in yourself* during this time?
- Have you grown more prayerful over these past seven weeks? More compassionate? More accepting? Or do you find yourself becoming more fearful? More needy? More easily annoyed?
- What shifts in your spirit would you like to sustain, and what changes would you like to set aside?

Q – Pastor Bryan talked about how Christ is at work in this season, shaping each one of us, and putting each one of us in just the right place in this new kind of spiritual house he's building. He shared the example of someone in his small group really leaning into a new experience of leading prayer.

- What new thing might Christ be shaping *you* to do as a member of this spiritual house? What new experience might you lean into?
- In what new way can you and your household *be* the church without *coming* to church?

The passage for 1 Peter continues in verse 10: "Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." Let's close in prayer, praising God for his goodness and mercy, and asking him to send his Spirit to continue to shape us as his people. Let's pray ...