

## COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

### COVID Exposures

FRIENDSHIP & DISCIPLINE

#### OVERVIEW

This COVID-era, along with all the other tensions pressing in on us, has exposed various issues we constantly face. To be sure, COVID didn't cause these issues any more than a truck driving over a bridge causes a crack to finally give way. As followers of Jesus, we need to be attentive to the world around us and the temptations inside of us that we might apply the truth of the gospel to all parts of our lives as we seek to find complete joy in Jesus.

#### APPLY // LONELINESS & FRIENDSHIP

**Main Idea:** Living in a broken, sinful can be lonely. Through Christ, we can have friendship with the Lord and each other.

1. Read Genesis 3:8-14.
2. Discuss this text show how sin brings isolation and loneliness. How is this still at work in our own lives? Why does Satan want us to feel lonely?
3. Read John 15:12-17.
4. What's the significance in Jesus saying he no longer calls his disciples servants but friends? What surprises you about this statement? What is Jesus communicating by calling them friends (and not family, though both are true)?
5. Discuss the ways Jesus was vulnerable with his disciples. How did this risky vulnerability aid in deepening their friendship?
6. Notice Jesus' command in verse 12. What implications does this have for us in our developing and deepening of friendships?
7. How does the gospel help us ask not just "Who is my friend?" but "Whose friend can I be?"
8. How would you counsel another church member who feels lonely?

#### OBSERVE & INTERPRET // LONELINESS & FRIENDSHIP

**Main Idea:** Restorative church discipline is a loving process of encouraging a fellow brother or sister caught in sin to repent that they might enjoy the freedom and fellowship of the gospel.

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20.
2. Notice in verse 15, Jesus says, "If your brothers sins against you." What audience is Jesus addressing? Why is this important as we seek to correctly interpret these verses?
3. Explain the "process" Jesus describes in verses 15-16?
4. In verse 17, Jesus says, "tell it to the church." What does this mean? Who is the church? How do we know who the church is? What does it mean to "tell it"?
5. If the unrepentant person who claims to be a Christian refuses to repent, what does Jesus say to do? What does it mean to treat this person as a Gentile or tax collector?

6. Why does Jesus provide these instructions for his church?
7. How does this process model the love and character of the Lord? How does the gospel motivate and inform this restorative discipline process?

## ACCOUNTABILITY

Relationships developed and deepened during accountability provide regular encouragement, and when necessary admonition, to spur each other on to delight in the supremacy of Jesus Christ. Ask one another heart-probing, clarifying questions, and help each other apply the gospel to your lives.

**QUESTION:** Are you lonely? If so, what would it look like to reach out to someone to let them know? If you are not currently lonely, are you reaching out to those who might be lonely?