

COMMUNITY GROUP STUDY GUIDE

COVID Exposures

DISCIPLINE & SUFFERING

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 // DISCIPLINE

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. Briefly describe the process Jesus lays out in this passage.
 - a. If you want an example of this taking place, you can read 1 Cor. 5:1-13.
3. Why is it important to remember that restorative discipline hinges on habitual, substantiated, unrepentant sin? Describe what each of those qualifiers mean.
4. How does restorative church discipline display the character of God?
5. How does restorative church discipline showcase the grace of the gospel?
6. How does restorative church discipline protect the witness of the church?
7. How does restorative church discipline care for other Christians inside the life of the church? How does it serve the one ensnared in sin?
8. Notice Jesus says, "tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen to him...." Why is it important that the church have final authority in these matters not just the pastors (or other leaders)? How does this inform your role as a church member?
9. What are some of the dangers we need to be aware of during the restorative church discipline process?
10. What is the danger in *not* faithfully engaging the discipline process?
11. How can we keep the motivation of love (for God, for the church, for Christians, for the lost) before us in this difficult process?

OBSERVE & INTERPRET // LONLINESS & FRIENDSHIP

Main Idea: Sin (corporately and personally) brings suffering. While we may not know exactly "why" God allows suffering to happen, we can trust the Lord has his purposes and his promises offer hope.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-11.
2. Summarize this passage in one or two sentences.

3. According to verse 8-9a, how severe is the suffering that Paul and Timothy have experienced?
4. In verse 3, how does Paul address God? What does it mean that he is the “Father of mercies and God of all comfort.” What’s the significance of “all”?
5. According to verse 4, what’s one of the reasons God provides comfort to us in our suffering? What might this look like in our lives?
6. In verse 5, what does it mean to “share abundantly in Christ’s sufferings.” What’s the purpose of this?
7. What does Paul say about his own sufferings in verse 6? Why do you think he was able to speak like this instead of doubting God or becoming bitter towards God?
8. According to verse 9, what’s another reason God allows suffering to come into our lives? What does it mean to “not rely on ourselves”? In suffering, what does it mean to rely on God?
9. In verse 9, notice how Paul describes God, “who raises the dead.” Why did Paul use this description when talking about suffering? How does this description of God provide hope?
10. Notice the end of verse 10. Where does Paul set his hope? How can Paul be so sure that “he will deliver us again”?
11. Notice Paul’s plea in verse 11. What does he say to the Corinthian church? What seems to be Paul’s understanding of how prayer works in suffering?
12. Think through the life of Jesus. How did he suffer and face evil? How did he respond? How does this inform how we might respond in the midst of evil and suffering?

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: How is your soul? Encouraged? Weary? Wayward? Speak gospel hope to one another.