

LIFE GROUP LEADERS GUIDE
The Joy of Being God #11 – “The Joy of Death”

Tips for Leaders

Let’s talk about icebreakers. At their best they give everyone in your Life Group an opportunity to speak and participate early in the evening. They provide you with a way to learn more about each other. For a very quiet Life Group it gets people talking and for a very talkative group it’s an effective way to get people listening! The questions or games you pick shouldn’t be too threatening, but should allow people to say something about themselves. Try not to say at the beginning of the meeting, “and now for the icebreaker,” as this might create more ice! Instead welcome people and simply ask the question. When you ask a question, it is helpful to answer first to give others the time to think of their answer. Even if you all know each other well it is worth running your Life Group in a way that newcomers will be welcome. That being said, like any part of this Guide, please tailor the question to your Life Group.

CONNECT IN with one another

- *[Leaders note: Having given you the tip above about icebreakers we’re not going to suggest one for this week. This week’s topic, “The Joy of Death”, will be a deeply emotional one for many. In this context it may not feel right to open your meeting with a bouncy, light-hearted question. All the way through this discussion be aware of the different personal situations in your group. Pause for prayer or personal reflections as needed. Feel free not to ask particular questions. Ask all of them with sensitivity and in love. This week is a great week to practice “Being There” for the individuals within your group.]*

CONNECT UP with God

- How do you react to the title of this sermon, “The Joy of Death”? Is such a thing possible?
- How do you think death is treated in our culture? E.g. In what ways is it talked about, or ignored? How is grief and bereavement honoured or dishonoured?
- Have you been to Christian and non-Christian funerals? In your experience, is there a difference between the two? What do you think accounts for this difference? *[Leaders note: This might lead them to contrast hope and despair. But this requires a lot of pastoral sensitivity, especially with those who have non-Christian family members or who have experienced this recently. If in doubt, you may like to skip this question.]*
- These next few questions explore the hope we have as Christians, even when facing death. Please read Colossians 1:15-23. Who does Paul say that Jesus is? *[Leaders note: you may want to pick out and explore particular phrases. Ask “what do you think that means?” to help move people beyond just repeating the verses you’ve just read together. Make sure you focus on v19, Jesus is fully God.]*
- Focus in on Colossians 1:20-22. If Jesus is fully God, what significance does this place on his death? *[Leaders note: point people towards considering Jesus as our Saviour from death. It wasn’t a myth, or something symbolic, he (the Almighty) died so that death might be defeated, and we might be rescued from it.]*
- Please read 1 Corinthians 15:54-58. These verses come in a chapter saturated with Paul’s teaching about Jesus’ resurrection and its implications. What has Jesus’ death and resurrection achieved for us? *[Leaders note: v54 (“when the...”) is looking ahead to the final resurrection when Jesus returns cf. v52. v57 Consider Jesus’ victory and the assurance that gives us. v58 our work is not in vain because death is not the end.]*
- Please turn to Philippians 1:21. In this verse Paul says: ‘For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.’ What do you think he means by phrase? Can you relate to his confidence? *[Leaders note: Paul wrote these verses while in prison. Where he faced the punishment of death.]*
- Turn to Psalm 103. Read and reflect: what do these verses tell us about who God is? What has he done for us? Pray and worship: Use this Psalm to inform your own prayers as you praise God for his great work of conquering death.

CONNECT OUT with the people exploring faith around you

- On Sunday Dan described the good news that Jesus Christ is our saviour from death as fuel for telling others about him. Pray together for opportunities to share Jesus’ lifegiving good news.
- Pray also for those in your Life Group, or those known by people in your Life Group, who are currently living through seasons of grief and bereavement.