



The God We Wish We Knew Week Four

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for this time to connect with each other and you. Help us to grow in friendship and faith while we are here today.

A Note to All New Groups:

- Start things by reading Our Growth Group Values (see the bottom of this document).
- Before you dive into the questions, go around the group and share: Your name, how you found EastLake Church, what brought you back the second time, and you decided to join a group.

Talk It Over

This week's talk was all about connection, bonds, friendship, and community.

- We probably all have forgotten someone's name or called someone the wrong name before. As an extreme example, think of coffee baristas. Because of the nature of a barista's job, they do this all the time. Share some of the classic or fun ways your name has butchered or pronounced wrong through the years.
- Describe one of the most treasured relationships you have ever had. What makes or made this relationship so valuable to you?
- Using relational words, how would you describe your relationship with God most days? Is he your best friend? A social friend — you know he is there, you connect every now and then, but it's not too deep? Generally more like an acquaintance? *Remember, there is no right or wrong answers here. We are simply looking to connect with on another. EastLake Church is full of people with very different journeys. We aim to respect every story here.*

Read Galatians 5:14 (New International Version)

The Bible tell us that God's motivation to be with us is love and that he want our life to be built on love and by love.

- Is this concept of love being the thing that matters most to God something you've always known, believed or heard? Is is a new idea to you, something that makes sense to you, something you wrestle with? Share your understanding and journey on this topic of love being the center of our faith.
- In your own words, how would you describe love.

Read Psalm 139:23

While community, friendships, and bonds are clear values shared in the Bible and we do see a clear theme of how relationships should look in the Bible, there is not a black-and-white prescription on how community should look Monday through Sunday or season to season in each of our unique lives.

(Continued on next page.)

- Are you in an introvert or an extrovert by nature? What part of connecting with other people comes most natural and what is the hardest part?
- In what ways are you grateful for the community you have this season? In what ways do you want or need more community?
- In your own words how would you describe community and loneliness.

Read Proverbs 12:26 (New International Version)

One of the nice aspects of being an adult, is we get to choose our own friends.

Take a second to think of your closest friends.

- What characteristics do these people have?
- In what ways do these friends make you better?
- How did these friends become your closest friends?

Read 1 Timothy 1:15

Humble people understand they aren't perfect and are open to growing, changing, and transforming.

- Share a time you ignored, numbed, or shifted blame. How did you make the situation worse by not taking proper ownership of your contribution? How could you have made things better by owning your part? What was the lesson and take away from this experience from you?
- Share a time you were able to take proper ownership for a conflict you experienced. What was it about this experience that empowered you to be humble? What were you able to learn from this experience?
- Is there a conflict, stress, or issue in your life right now that you feel you need to approach with more humility? If you are comfortable, share the parts of the story you want.

Read Galatians 6:5 (New Century Version) and Romans 12:5

We were made to be connected, but we also have an active part to play in the process.

- Looking at how connected you feel now, are there any next steps you are looking to grow in?

Read Ephesians 5:2

God loves you and desires to show you his love. God's love is not contingent on you having your life together or even how much you love him. God's love is laid out clearly in the Bible and God desires to show you his love.

- What are some various ways we might experience God's love? If you feel you've experienced God's love in a personal way, you can also share what that experience was like.

Closing Prayer

God, you know where we are in life and what it is we need. Help us to figure out what you are inviting us into. Help us to experience your love and grace as we take our individual next steps. Amen.

(Our Growth Group Values on next page.)

Our Growth Group Values

We've found that it's a good idea for groups to look at their shared values, expectations, and commitments right off the bat so that every member starts on the same page.

At EastLake Church, groups exist to help people grow in friendship and faith.

This is true of our group too: We are here to grow in friendship and our faith.

In efforts to get the most of our time together this group's season, we want everyone to try and come consistently to group and to communicate if we need to miss a week.

At EastLake Church, we value safe environments. Here is what this means for your group:

- There are no perfect people allowed. While we don't suggest anyone gets transparent on week one about personal issues, we do encourage everyone to authentically show up each week.
- We are all in process therefore we should plan to be patient and gracious toward one another.
- While we aim to show care about what is happening in one another's lives, and we hope to encourage one another in practical and life-giving ways, this group is not going to solve people's problems. When and if we want people to speak into our current situation, we can directly ask for wisdom and ideas.
- We want everyone to share from the heart, but we don't want this to be a place we throw others under the bus. Let's be considerate and careful about the way in which we talk about others.
- There is rarely just one right or wrong answer to a discussion question. Most often there are several different perspectives and facets to one question. We make room for the various ideas people bring to the table. The goal of most questions is to get you to think about Jesus, God, the Bible, life and so on.
- We give each other permission to respectfully ask difficult questions and cheer each other on toward real life change.
- We all have our doubts, curiosities, and questions about God. We make space for them here.
- We don't monopolize the conversation; we take turns.
- Friendships take time and happen organically; we don't rush the process.
- We share ownership of this group. There are various ways each member can volunteer — e.g. snacks, sending reminders, taking weekly attendance, organizing childcare, plan fun events, and so on.
- What is shared in your growth group stays in your growth group. If something is shared that presents a concern that needs further spiritual or legal input, please contact karla@eastlakechurch.com.

In addition, to our Group Values here are some important ground rules:

Growth groups are not for selling products, raising funds, or political pitches.

- If you represent a career or a product in your professional life, you can discuss this outside the group on a personal, relational level, but no one wants the growth group to become a sales or fundraising pool.

- This is not a voting box so don't turn our group into the next political debate. Leave that up to CNN.
- Growth groups are not dating services. Though people have met and married through our growth groups, this is not a dating service.