

Community Part 5: Confession

How to Use

The goal with these discussion guides during the next few weeks, is that with your group or a few others, to have honest and authentic discussions around this idea of living life together as a “new family in Christ.” The hope is that this resource is not simply a study guide to further discuss the previous weekend’s message or a certain text in Scripture, but instead an application guide of how to further flesh out and live out God’s vision for biblical community. Each week will have a brief overview to read together, 2-3 discussion questions and a suggested practice to implement with your group.

The discussion questions have been crafted in a way to help get past the surface level response we can default to and to dig into honest and perhaps challenging conversations. You might not get through them all each week and that’s okay. Allow for some space for the Spirit to work and to give time for the conversation to reach a more intimate level. We would encourage you to invite the people you’re walking through these guides with to perhaps be a little more vulnerable than they might normally be. If your group size is large, consider breaking up into a few smaller groups to better facilitate honest conversations.

Our goal for the suggested practice each week is to help establish some new rhythms and ways to live out this idea of biblical community. Our challenge to you is to try these practices through the entire 9 weeks of this series. Perhaps at the end discuss with your group about how these practices went and what they might want to continue doing.

We would also encourage you to start each discussion with a time of prayer, inviting the Spirit to work in you and your group’s heart and minds around this topic of community.

Overview (Read this aloud together)

Leader: Read James 5

Jesus came to create a new community. A community of honesty, humility, vulnerability, confession, and healing. Living in ongoing confession, prayer and healing is something we should embrace as part of living as His people.

“One of the biggest mistakes we have made in the modern church is to reimagine spiritual maturity as the need to confess less. The unspoken assumption is, ‘As I ascend in relationship with God, I confess less because I have less to confess.’ True spiritual maturity, though, is the opposite. It is not ascension but an archaeological dig as we discover layer after layer of what is in us all along. Spiritual maturity means more confession not less. Maturity is discovering the depths of my personal brand of fallenness and the depths to which God’s grace has really penetrated, even without me knowing it.”

The pathway for maturity is not an ascent it is a descent, and a maturing church is a confessing church - not a church without sin but a church without secrets."

- Tyler Stanton

Discussion Questions

What has your experience or practice with confession looked like? Where has it been difficult or not used well? Where have you seen it bring joy, compassion, or even greater self-awareness?"

What would help create a safe space or person when it comes to confession? What would take away from a space or person being safe when you think about confessing.

Leader: Consider using the next chunk of time to split into smaller same gender groups and confess to one another the ways that you have failed to love God and others. As a way of honoring one another's privacy and comfort level, you may want to simply share one word or phrase that sums up what you're wanting to confess (e.g. lust, jealousy, gossip, resentment, rage, over-indulgence, pride, etc.).

Keep in mind that this is not the time to provide counsel, advice, or share a connected personal story. Simply hear the confession, anything else they want to share about it, and then bless them in their honesty before God and others by praying a simple prayer over and with them. Your group gets to host a space to offer grace, while God is the one who extends forgiveness.

Also, keep in mind that nothing that gets shared in your group should be shared outside of it. What is being shared is vulnerable and sacred, so please respect the trust being given by not sharing it with anyone else. If something that is shared involves a threat of harm to self or other people, it is appropriate to privately share that concern with a LG leader or pastor.

Practice for This Week

1. Take time this week to ask God to search you and reveal if there is sin in your own life that needs to be confessed. Practice confession by either telling the person you've hurt or someone who can help (write an apology, make a phone call, etc.).
2. Read through Psalm 139 or Psalm 51 or James 5. Be still before God and ask Him to breathe new life into you as you confess your need and dependence on him. Take some time to pray that God would help you desire honesty, which leads to confession, which leads to change.