

## **Group Discussion Guide: Dear Church | July 10, 2022**

### **Begin with Scripture, silence, and prayer (5 minutes).**

**Read Isaiah 52:7-10** to begin your time together. As we continue in our sermon series, we want to orient our hearts and minds to knowing and loving God. Use this passage to help you do just that as you get started.

After you've finished reading, have a specified person in the group pray for your time together.

### **Read the passage with silence and prayer (10 minutes).**

Like last week, take some time to begin your gathering by reading through the Scripture and reflecting on it as a group. For this exercise, take some time to open 1 Corinthians together. This shouldn't be done quickly or haphazardly. It should be done slowly and somberly with an acknowledgement that the Lord is present with you. Here are your steps:

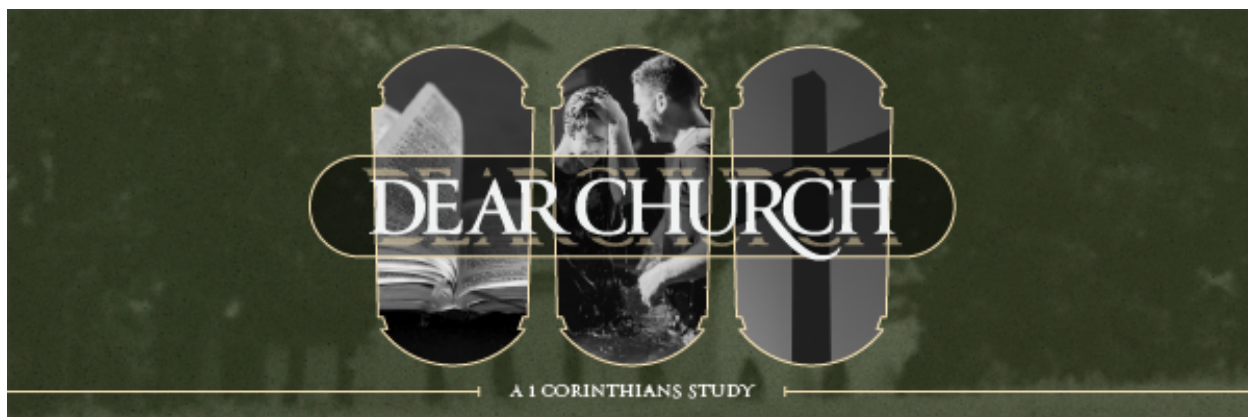
- Designate one person in your group to read the passage three times.
- Instruct your group as to what is about to happen. They're listening for any words or phrases that God might want to specifically invite them to take notice of.
- Once everyone is ready, quiet your group and have the designated reader read **1 Corinthians 2:1-5** once. Allow for a brief period of silence for people to reflect.
- After that silence, have the designated reader read the passage again, asking your group to again ponder what words or phrases God might be impressing upon them in the ensuing silence.
- Next, have your designated reader read the passage one last time.
- Once finished, instruct your group to pray to God and share any thoughts, concerns, confessions, etc. that came to mind.

When all these steps are finished, debrief your reading of the passage together.

### **Debrief (10 minutes).**

Ask the following questions to debrief your time in the Scripture together:

- What words or phrases stood out to you?



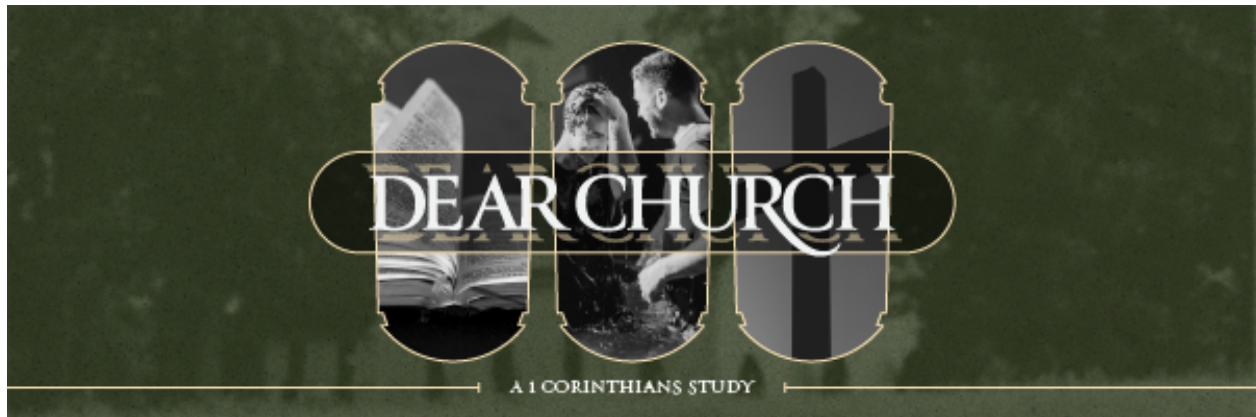
- Why do you think God brought those specific verses or words to you?
- If you're willing to share: What sort of prayer did you offer up to God as a result?

**Read Scripture and debrief the sermon (40 minutes).**

*Select a few of these questions that you think may be the most fruitful for discussing the reality that God wants us to consider our calling and His choosing of us so that no one may boast in anything but Christ alone.*

*You may even come up with a few questions that would be good for your specific group to discuss.*

- How would you describe this weekend's sermon?
- What from this sermon resonated with you? What challenged you?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 2:1-5.** Summarize what Paul is saying to the Corinthians in these verses. What's his point?
- How does Paul's style of *communicating* the gospel reflect the *content* of his gospel message? Or, in other words, how did Paul's *method* reflect his *message*?
- How was this different from how the Corinthians typically experienced speakers and orators in their day?
- In his sermon, Emerson talked about how Paul was relaying *how* he brought the gospel to bear on the Corinthians. When you think about bringing the gospel to our culture, what barriers do you foresee?
- Emerson talked about three kinds of barriers we face: (1) spiritual; (2) cultural; and (3) personal. Which of these do you think hinders you the most from sharing the gospel? Explain.
- In the sermon, we learned that when Paul came to the Corinthians with the message of Jesus he came with **presence, proclamation, without pretense, power, and purpose.** Which of these most resonated with you? Which do you feel is most lacking in your life?
- Often, we're prone to two equal but opposite errors. Sometimes we focus too much on presence at the expense of proclamation and sometimes we focus too much on proclamation at the expense of presence. Where do you need more balance between the two in your life?
- Split up the following verses and have each person in your group read, paraphrase, and then share with the whole group what the verse they read was and how it potentially



relates to our discussion about evangelism: **Matthew 5:13-16; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:6-8; Acts 20:24; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:15.**

- What is one main takeaway you have from this message and these passages of Scripture?

***Bonus activity:*** *If you're able, take a few moments to have each person pull up a photo of Francisco de Zurbaran's "The Crucifixion" painting online. Have each person spend 5 minutes quietly reflecting on how Christ came to US with his very own presence, with proclamation, without pretense, in power, and with purpose.*

**Finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).**

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.