

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the week of May 30-June 5, 2021
"OUR SHEPHERD IN THE VALLEY"

GETTING STARTED

To the facilitator: Use this section to introduce the topic. If possible, give a brief recap of the sermon.

Share a memorable point, a spiritual lesson, a personal application, a question, or something that challenged you from the sermon last Sunday.

What kinds of things and/or activities help boost your mood throughout the day?
(Example: coffee, favorite snack, walking, playing games, etc.)

GROUP DISCUSSION

As a group, memorize Psalms 23:1-4.

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "the valley of the shadow of death"? What experiences have you witnessed in your life or that of others that would fit what that phrase suggests?
2. If verse 4—and Psalm 23 as a whole—are painting an accurate picture of reality, do you believe Christians today have a good understanding of what the Bible teaches about suffering? Why or why not?
3. How does God's presence remove our fear of evil? In what ways would a deeper focus on God's presence have changed the way you responded to difficulty in the past?
4. Many people (including Christians) place confidence in false shepherds. For instance, we are confident in our health, or our finances, or our intelligence. Has the Lord ever revealed to you the ways in which you might have followed false shepherds? Is this a continuing struggle? Where did you place your confidence in?
5. How does David's use of the rod and staff as illustration of God's protection broadened your understanding of who our Lord is? Can you remember an experience when our Good Shepherd used the rod and/or the staff in your life?

6. Did you notice that the verse says "through" and "not" in the dark valley? What are the implications? What one lesson is the Lord teaching you to remember when you pass through the valley of the shadow of death?

7. [NEXT STEPS]

The valley of darkness may be inevitable, but just as inevitable is the presence of God actively involved in our life.

- ☐ I will fear no evil in the promised presence of the Lord.
- ☐ I will submit to God's rod and staff.
- ☐ I will, by God's grace, strive to grow in the knowledge of God's Word.
- ☐ I will lean on the Holy Spirit.

Don't forget to:

- ☐ Go through the devotionals everyday this week.
- ☐ Have a regular daily time of prayer and reading of God's Word.
- ☐ Commit 30 minutes a day for God's intervention in this fight against the COVID virus.

CLOSING THE SESSION.

Close the session by taking the time to pray for one another. Consider the following as you pray:

- Pray for strength in God's presence and comfort in his guidance.
- Take the time to pray for our nation, for peace and for the gospel to prosper during this time of the pandemic.
- Pray for those who are hurting, going through fear, worry and anxiety in the group.
- Pray for your unsaved family, friends and loved ones.