



Encounter Jesus Weekend

Opening Prayer

God, what an honor to encounter you through the presence of Christ. Help us to continue to notice where you are at work in our time together today. Help us to experience you. Amen.

Talk It Over

Over the past several weeks we have been looking at the ways God moves in the common and the ordinary. This idea of God doing extraordinary things with what is ordinary is highlighted in the ways Jesus blessed, broke, and gave bread. This weekend we took the time to come together with worship, communion, and more experiential ways to encounter God in community and in our everyday lives.

- What did you notice most about God this past week?
- What did you notice about you?

There are many ways we can encounter Jesus because he is always present. As we gathered this weekend, we practiced some of the ways we are invited to encounter and experience him.

Prayer | Read Phillipians 4:6 (NIV) and James 5:16 (NIV)

Prayer can be a vulnerable posture of our heart and praying with someone else can be even more vulnerable. Despite the ways this might be a challenge, scripture helps us to see that we need others in our lives supporting and guiding us on our journeys. As much as we can sometimes feel the desire to pull in or away when we are hurting, there is healing when we join another person in prayer before God. Prayer becomes a way to encounter Jesus.

- How does praying for or with others impact you?
- What's one thing you are grateful for when it comes to prayer?
- In what ways are you being stretched when it comes to prayer?

Scripture | Read Psalm 23 (NLT)

Scripture is another way we encounter Jesus and contains the story of Jesus. God's love for us is expressed through his word, the Bible. Engaging with his word allows us to encounter Jesus as he speaks to us.

- Do you have a history with this passage of scripture? If so, what memories or emotions come to mind when you hear it?
- Reread Psalm 23 (NLT). Take a minute and reflect on this passage. How do you need God to care for you? Do you need to be led beside quiet waters, to be anointed, to be comforted?

Communion | Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-27 (NIV) and Romans 8:1-2 (Voice)

There is no better picture of forgiveness than communion. We are invited into God's Kingdom, saved by his power, and experience his glory all because of the cross. Through communion we meet with our Savior, look back upon his sacrifice, ask for and receive forgiveness, renew our commitment to our Lord and his body — the church— and anticipate his return.

(Content continued on the next page.)

- If you feel comfortable, share your experience with communion throughout your life.
- How do you encounter Jesus in this practice?

Generosity | Read Proverbs 25:22 (MSG) and Matthew 25:40 (NIV)

As Christ-followers we are invited to partner with God in meeting the needs of our world. Serving others with our time, talent, and treasure is a great way to encounter Jesus. As a church, we do this each year in many varying ways. One of those ways is through the Christmas Offering.

- Share a story of generosity with the group. Is there a time where you have been a recipient of someone else's generosity?
- What do you notice about God when you serve others or give generously?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, we know that you love us and you want us to have constant encounters with you. May we continue to experience and turn to you in our everyday lives. Help us to see you at work in our lives. Be near to us this season. Amen.

Group Logistics [A Reminder for New Groups]

As your group heads to a close for the holidays, be sure everyone is on the same page regarding expectations. Is this a break? Are you going to restart with the next group launch? Consider ending your season with some sort of fun celebration.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressured to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.