

## Faith Promise Discussion Questions 5.22.16

### Leader Prep Section

Take time before your small group meeting to prepare by reading through the questions and scripture passage so that you can select 4-5 questions that are best suited to your group.

Try to work through at least one question from each of the sections - Hook, Book, Look, Took in order to move from observation to application.

When possible spend time in prayer for each member of your group.

### Questions

#### **Hook - Ice breaker type questions to help make the transition into the study time.**

1. Share a story of a time when you were excluded from something. Did you eventually get access to it?
2. What does reconciliation look like when it is done well?

### Background

Paul spent several years in Ephesus a town in Asia Minor throughout his ministry. He wrote Ephesians most likely to a group of churches he helped get started and was supporting as a mentor. It addresses some key issues they were facing including the issue of the relationship between Jews and Gentiles in their church. Paul closes the section immediately preceding the one we are looking at with a reminder that we are all "saved by grace through faith," not works, and that we are all created in Christ Jesus and when we follow him we have good things to do that he has set before us.

Read Ephesians 2:11-22

#### **Book - These questions are designed to get you into the text itself.**

1. According to Paul what has allowed those who were far away to be brought near?
  - See verse 12.
2. In verses 14 through 16 Paul makes a case for making Jews and Gentiles "one new humanity." How was this accomplished and why?
3. What was the common message to Jews and Gentiles found in verses 17 and 18?
4. What is the outcome when we no longer live as foreigners and strangers?

#### **Look - These questions will take you on a deeper look at what the passage means for us today.**

1. Who are the groups that are divided today, the Jews and Gentiles of our world today?
  - Please note Paul is writing this to believers who are living in community together as part of the local church.
2. How do we reach out to our modern equivalent of Jews and Gentiles with this message of peace and reconciliation?
3. What dangers do we need to be aware of when sharing peace and reconciliation with others?
  - A potential pitfall is that rather than bringing peace we would bring religious expectations or that in our desire to bring peace we would be open to compromising the truth that Jesus is the only way to the Father.

**Took - These questions are focused on applying the big idea from the text to our lives.**

1. How did you first get access to the message of Jesus and the church?
2. How are you sharing access to Jesus and his church with others in your life?
3. What impact on our world do you think we could have if we fully embrace and practice living the kind of reconciliation and peace that Paul talks about in this passage in Ephesians?

Closing

We are all called to share the peace that comes from knowing Jesus. We get to partner with Jesus to share his love and compassion in this world. Spend some time together praying for open eyes and hearts to see and act on the opportunities that Jesus puts in your path to help provide access to his peace. It is possible for us to help dig irrigation ditches that bring living water to people who have never known it.

Reminder: In order to avoid becoming isolated or insulated from the world we have to be open to all the stories of what is happening in the world. Then we need to seek out opportunities to be Jesus in the places we can reach or are called to participate.