

New Year's Guided Reflection

I wanted to share some reflection questions that I have found helpful in my life over the years. Last year our small group took an evening and worked through a number of these questions together and people found it helpful. (By together I mean we read a question, put some music on, people wrote in their journals, then moved to another question. At the end we shared about it a bit.)

I wanted to make them available to everyone in case they would be beneficial to either you as an individual or as a small group. (And if you do it as an individual I'd encourage you to share some of your insights with someone you trust.) Enjoy!

If you use these in a small group setting, I'd encourage the following:

- Have people bring notebooks or journals.
- Don't give all the questions at once. Give one, then allow people 5 - 10 minutes to write. Then either give a chance to share or move to the next question.
- Give time for different questions but don't feel pressure to give people all the time they need, this may simply be starting something they continue in their own time.
- Give people a chance to share insights but don't force any sharing.
- Don't feel pressure to get through all the questions. You can always give people take-away questions at the end.

Questions for Guided Reflection:

- *Questions for looking back on last year*
 - What were the important events in your life this past year? In other words, what events impacted you in significant ways?
 - Write the following 5 categories down. Physical, emotional, relational, vocational, spiritual.
 - For each category, write 5 words or phrases that characterized that area for you this past year.
 - Pay attention to what has your attention. What things had most of your mental and emotional attention this past year?
 - What things are you thankful to Jesus for this past year?
 - Where did you sense God's presence this past year? Or perhaps, where can you see God's presence in your life in hindsight?
- *Questions for looking ahead to next year*
 - What events or decisions are awaiting you in the next year?
 - What things are you going to need to trust Jesus in the next year?
 - Where do you want to focus your energy in the next year?
 - What do you want to add or embrace in the next year?
 - What needs to be released, subtracted, or said 'no' to in the next year?
 - If Jesus came to you and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" how would you respond?

- *Questions to debrief the reflection time as a group*
 - What did you notice as you worked through these questions?
 - Did you notice any themes or threads running through your reflection?
 - Did anything surprise you or catch you off-guard?
 - What's one takeaway for you from this as you go into next year?