

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series description:

In Scripture, Paul prays that the church in Ephesus would be rooted and grounded in love so that they may be filled with the fullness of God. What does it mean to be rooted and grounded? How can we continue to bear fruit for the Kingdom that will last? And what are the marks of a fruitful community of faith?

Join us for this new teaching series as we consider the values of Revolution Church and find inspiration to be rooted together in love toward a future with Christ.

***This is a great opportunity for newcomers to learn more about our church and mission! Invite a friend and we will see you there!*

Message description:

The encounter of the resurrected Jesus with the “doubting” Thomas shows us what it means to live a life of faith; never stop asking questions and seek the real presence of Christ around you. In many ways, it is not about doubt out all, but about seeking and asking and pondering the mystery of God that can lead us into deeper experiences of God at work around us. This is what we mean by our second value, RESURRECT- learning to live the way of Jesus. We are serious about the lifelong growth into holiness that requires learning and questioning and growing over time. In all levels of our discipleship ministry, we are passionate about telling the story of Jesus in such a way that others are invited to follow him.

Key Scriptures

Ephesians 3:14-4:6

John 20:25-29

Acts 17:24-29

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. What do you appreciate about the story of Thomas and his encounter with Jesus after the resurrection? Did you notice anything different in this reading of the story?
2. In her teaching Rachel shared the following quote: "We did not see or touch. We were not there. We heard. Someone told us the story in a way that invited us to say yes. We heard someone say something, perhaps a small something that spoke to us, as if calling our name, from depth to depth. There was a sermon, a passage, a prayer. We heard." Who were some of the first people who told you the story of Jesus? How are you teaching others the story in a way that invites them to meet Jesus? Or asked another way, how are you living out our baptismal vows to raise our young ones up in the faith and encourage the faith of one another?
3. Where do you see that we could strengthen our value of RESURRECT, learning to live like Jesus, through our various teaching ministries?
4. How are you learning to live like Jesus through your house group? What would you like to see different or changed about the experience so that we might grow deeper in our faith, rooted and grounded in love?
5. What are some things you'd like to learn about next in our teaching series? (email them to Rachel!!)

Going Deeper, from companion guide for *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations* by Robert Schnase

Vibrant, fruitful, growing congregations practice Intentional Faith Development. Christ's gracious invitation through Radical Hospitality invites and welcomes us, and God's transforming presence in Passionate Worship opens our hearts to Christ's pardon, love and grace, creating in us a desire to follow. Growing in Christ requires more than weekly worship through, and it is through Intentional Faith Development that God's Spirit works in us, perfecting us in the practice of love as we grow in the knowledge and love of God.

Learning in community replicates the way Jesus deliberately taught his disciples. Jesus taught in community so that we would learn to discover his presence in others. The practice of learning in community gives disciples a network of support, encouragement and direction as we seek to grow in Christ. As we consciously appropriate the stories of faith with others, we discover that our questions, doubts, temptations and missteps are not unusual – but are part of the journey. Others help us interpret God's Word for our lives. The fruit of the spirit that we see in Christ cannot be learned apart from a network of relationships. In the intimacy of small groups, we learn not only from writers and thinkers and people of the past through Scripture and books, but also from mentors and models and fellow travelers in our congregation. We give and receive the care of Christ by praying for one another, supporting each other through periods of grief and difficulty, and celebrating one another's joys and hopes. The sanctifying grace of God bears the human face of our fellow disciples. Additionally, learning in community provides accountability for our faith journeys; by covenanting together, we stay stronger in our convictions and habits.

Intentional Faith Development uses the word "intentional" as it refers to deliberate effort, purposeful action toward an end, and high prioritization. It describes the practice that view the ministry of Christian education and formation, small group work, and Bible study as absolutely critical to their mission and that consistently offer opportunities for people of all ages, interests, and faith experiences to learn in community. The practices of the faith are too demanding without the support from others.

Insights into Intentional Faith Development:

- People desire fellowship and want to learn about the faith, but they have trouble squeezing it into their lives; the more the church can do – the better!
- Leaders need to consider breaking out of usual patterns and expectations of place, frequency, and curriculum to reach people.
- Bible study changes churches. When church leaders take their own spiritual growth seriously and immerse themselves in Scriptural study, in prayer, and in fellowship, they understand the purpose of the church and the point of ministry differently.
- “The purpose of leadership in the church is not to make the church more ‘business-like’, but to make the church more church-like.”- Peter Drucker
- Churches that practice Intentional Faith Development offer home groups, “brown bag” lunch Bible studies, and many other mid-week faith studies at a variety of times – focusing on the schedules/interests of the people they seek to serve, not the church’s schedule.
- Start new groups based on visitors, new members and people not yet attending the church.
- Create classes/studies with special topics to attract the interest of unchurched people.

Read the description and insights regarding intentional faith development.

- **What do we mean by intentional?**
- **Do you think we are intentional enough in our faith development and growth- as a church, house group, and individual?**
- What type of learning opportunity would you like to attend at Revolution if it were offered?