

Life groups—Ethos of accountability

Life Groups operate within the following ethos.

- What is shared is confidential
- All are comfortable with group members
- They are friendship based
- There is freedom in how groups form
- Regular attendance is important
- Facilitators are trained and accountable
- They express low control—high accountability
- We listen to one another and to God
- Individuals share what they want
- Sharing is without judgment and with grace
- Prayer for one another is central
- Normally same-gender
- Ethos erosion concerns the pastoral leadership of the church



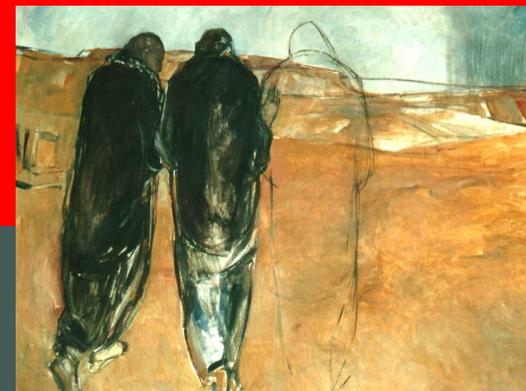
Questions from God to you

All our knowing of and seeking after God is but a faint echo of God's knowledge and seeking of us. Paul wrote to some Christians: 'Now that you have come to know God, *or rather be known by God*'... It cannot be any other way — because well before we had any inclination towards God, God was infinitely more moving towards us with loving and life-giving intention. And so it will always be that any outworking of salvation in our lives is because God is at work within us to will and do for his pleasure (Philippians 2:12-13). So relax! Receive!

This has a very simple practical consequence in how we approach prayer. It means that prayer is not so much us trying to get ourselves right in our approach to God—right thoughts, words, character etc. It is much, much more a matter of putting ourselves in the place where we cultivate an awareness of how God is looking and being towards us. It is to switch our perspective to ask time and again about the kind of God we are meeting in the situations we find ourselves in, and in our reaction to those situations. Things do not revolve around us but we revolve around God.

This shift in our thinking is like Copernicus' discovery that the earth revolves around the sun. These questions from God to you help you shift the way you look at things. Rather than analyzing yourself, you still yourself in God's presence as you place yourself before God. You start to discover the freedom of understanding that your life revolves around God and you relax in God's orbit!

Questions from God to you



Questions from God to you

Life groups

UP—relating to God

Will you...

...believe that I love you without any reservation?

...believe in your own worth?

...walk with insecurity for a while?

...believe that I am inviting you to greater wholeness?

...allow my grace to move within you?

...look long at my love for you?

...take refuge in the shadow of my wings?

...allow me to walk with you?

...talk to me about what is difficult for you?

...say 'yes' to the growth I offer you?

...accept my compassion?

...share the strength I've given you with someone else?

...be quiet enough to hear me?

...recognize your own weak areas?

...bring me your anxieties and concerns?

...let me be your strength?

...be vulnerable with me?

...give me your ache so that I can heal you?

...trust me to raise up the good things in you that have died?

...stand close to Calvary and learn from me?

...believe in the power of my resurrection?

IN—relating to others

Will you...

...delight in the friendship that is feeding your spirit and receive it as my gift to you?

...be my servant to your friend/family member?

...carry this person in your heart and pray for them for a season?

...guard your freedom and independence in your deepest friendships?

...let me be Lord of this relationship?

...trust me to share something that is difficult with your friend/family member?

...allow this relationship that has been so precious to you move into another season?

...let this person be a servant to you for a while?

...face how this relationship drains you?

...trust me for the grace to forgive what someone you cared about has done to you?

...let me strengthen you to speak honestly?

...keep on releasing the anger and bitterness you feel toward the person that hurt you, and be patient with yourself in your struggle with them?

...trust me now your friend/family member has been taken from you in the way they were once with you?

OUT—relating in society

Will you...

...be there for someone to lean on you today?

...be hospitable to someone by listening to them with care and attention?

...look for my servant who shares with you in peace, but who may not yet know me? (Luke 10:6)

...be my salt and light in the place I have called you to be at the moment?

...nurture and feed the dream I am giving you for my kingdom?

...be unashamed of me and my truth amidst hostility or mockery?

...seek to further my righteousness and justice where these are lacking?

...be my channel of peace and reconciliation where there is suspicion and enmity?

...pray for the 'enemy' that has blocked you or done evil to you?

...pray for the courage to 'be Christ'?

...be my witness?

* UP questions amended from material written by Joyce Rupp