

# COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Honoring Christ in Life & Death | Pastor Mike McKinney

Monday, Sept 15 - Sunday, Sept 21 (Week 1)

## EMPHASIS FOR THE MONTH: **Laying a Foundation & Building Relational Capital**

As our groups get started this semester, let's be intentional about creating space for people to really get to know one another. Building relational capital doesn't happen all at once, it grows when we leave time for conversation, listen well, and encourage members to share life together. This month, prioritize slowing down the agenda, leaving room before and after meetings for fellowship, and finding simple ways to help group members connect. Strong relationships built now will become the foundation for deeper discipleship and care in the months ahead.

**ICE BREAKER:** What's one of your favorite simple pleasures in life, something small that always makes your day better?

## CAB ANNOUNCEMENTS:

1. Yesterday was our Step Up Sunday - an opportunity to discover where God can use your gifts to serve and be part of a team. You can view all of our teams on our website under the "connect" tab under "Join A Team". If you didn't get a chance to talk to any of our ministry leaders, but are still interested in getting connected, please contact our Administrative Coordinator, Damaris Tabares ([damaris.tabares@churchatbergen.org](mailto:damaris.tabares@churchatbergen.org)).
2. All women are invited to a breakfast buffet and time of fellowship on Saturday, September 20, from 9:30-11:30 AM. Please bring a breakfast item and join us for an easy Fall craft and a devotional time. We will meet at the church and hope you can join us. To register or if you have any questions, please email [info@churchatbergen.org](mailto:info@churchatbergen.org).
3. Baptism is a joyful step of faith and a public way to share what Jesus has done in your life. On Sunday, September 28 our church family will celebrate together, and there's always room for more! If you're ready to take this step, we'd love to walk with you. Please email [info@churchatbergen.org](mailto:info@churchatbergen.org)
4. We hope you will join us every Tuesday at 6:30 PM for our weekly prayer gathering.

**PRAYER FOR DISCUSSION:** Leader or Co-Leader prays for the discussion time. Pray that the The Holy Spirit would assist in the conversing, processing, and listening of the discussion.

**SERMON DISCUSSION TIME:** Have someone read this week's scripture from Philippians 1:12-24, and then this sermon summary to jog everyone's memory:

*What does it mean to be unashamed of Christ in a world that grows increasingly hostile to faith? Pastor Mike addresses this burning question in light of recent tragic events, including the assassination of Charlie Kirk. Drawing from Paul's powerful words in Philippians 1, he reminds us that true discipleship means counting everything as loss compared to knowing Christ, whether in life or death. With raw authenticity, Pastor Mike shares his own near-death experience at age 40 to emphasize the urgency of*



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*our gospel mission. He challenges believers to stop "playing church" and instead fan into flame the Spirit's gift of courage that already resides within them. The message culminates in Paul's timeless declaration that "to live is Christ, and to die is gain," calling every Christian to live boldly for Jesus regardless of the cost. This isn't just about personal courage, it's about joining the greatest mission the world has ever known, where even persecution becomes a platform for proclaiming Christ's saving power.*

**QUESTION #1:** The sermon emphasized the importance of being unashamed of the gospel. What might being unashamed of the gospel look like in your daily life?

**QUESTION #2:** How does Paul's statement "to live is Christ and to die is gain" challenge our modern views about life, death, and what we value most? What would need to change in your life for you to genuinely say "to live is Christ and to die is gain"?

**QUESTION #3:** The sermon discusses how some people were preaching Christ from wrong motives, yet Paul rejoiced that Christ was being proclaimed. How should we respond when we see people sharing the Gospel with imperfect motivations? Have you ever found yourself judging others' methods of sharing their faith? How does Paul's response challenge your perspective?

**QUESTION #4:** Pastor Mike emphasizes that being unashamed of Jesus is 'not a personality thing' but 'a spiritual thing.' What's the difference between natural boldness and Spirit-given courage? How have you experienced the difference between trying to be bold in your own strength versus relying on the Holy Spirit's power?

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Spend time taking **and recording** prayer requests and then pray together as a group (*I strongly encourage you to send out the prayer requests weekly to your group to keep everyone informed and in the loop on how to pray for one another throughout the week. This also makes it easier to check-in with people who have shared requests to see how the Lord has been working in their lives*).



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