

T H E G O D W H O S E E K S

God Seeks the Downcast

*Group Discussion Guide
Week of February 4, 2024*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CITIZENS BASICS

*Sunday, February 11 | 11am-11:45am
Dowd YMCA*

We offer Citizens Basics a few times a year for anyone who is new to our church. It is the first step into the life of our community.

Led by various pastors and staff, this class consists of 30 minutes of teaching and 15 minutes of Q&A, with the goal of giving an overview of our vision as a church and how you can be a part of that vision.

Lunch and childcare is provided, but please register in advance.

SUPER BOWL BREWERY HANGOUT

*Sunday, February 11 | 6:30pm
Vaulted Oak Brewing*

Join us for our 3rd Annual Super Bowl Brewery Hangout at Vaulted Oak Brewing. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks are available for purchase. You can bring your own food, order pizza from across the street, or enjoy the food truck. Bring a friend and come join us for the big game!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES

*Wednesday, February 14 | 7am + 7pm
Dowd YMCA (Calhoun Room)*

Ash Wednesday marks the start of the church season of Lent - a season set aside by the global church to reflect upon our brokenness, contemplate our great need for forgiveness and remember the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion. This year, we will have two identical services in the Calhoun Room at the Dowd YMCA at 7am and 7pm. We encourage you to pick one of the two services to attend. Each service will start on time and last for 45 minutes. Please note - childcare will not be provided but children are welcome in the services with us.

VISION FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Citizens Community Groups gather on a regular basis to discuss the Scriptures, care for one another, share life as a family, and engage missionally in our city. When we gather for discussions like this one, our primary aim is not to simply talk about some good ideas, but to wrestle with the real state of our hearts and how to become doers of the Scriptures.

To that end, there are three ground rules that make for a good discussion:

- 1. Be Earnest.** We're here to encounter God, so we are not satisfied with trite conversation.
- 2. Be Honest.** The gospel is good news for sinners, so we put aside false smiles or fake attitudes to share the real state of our hearts.
- 3. Be Humble.** We are all works in progress seeking to be formed into Christlikeness, so we lower our defenses, open to correction from the Scriptures and one another.

STUDY THE SCRIPTURE

Read 1 Kings 18:20 - 19:3.

After defeating 450 prophets of the false god, Baal, Elijah assumes that King Ahab, Queen Jezebel, and the rest of Israel will be ready to repent. Instead, they want Elijah dead, which sends Elijah into deep depression. Have you ever experienced a time where your soul was downcast because of something you hoped God would do, but He didn't? What was that like?

Read 1 Kings 19:4-18.

In Elijah's moments of despondency and despair, God sought Him out, through physical provision, but primarily through His presence. How has God's presence been comforting to you in times of sorrow, darkness, and depression?

DISCUSS THE SERMON

In the sermon, we said that for some of us, like Elijah, we need more of God. That we often seek healing without the healer. Although counseling, nutrition, sleep, and certain other forms of "self-care" can be helpful when we're downcast, we often neglect the basic practices of Scripture and prayer. In other words, we neglect seeking God.

Have there been ways you've sought "healing without the healer" in your struggle with being downcast?

What are ways you can reevaluate your search for healing, bringing God not just "into the equation", but to the forefront of your desire for emotional health?

PRACTICE

One way that Elijah seeks God in his despondency is through fasting. Fasting means an intentional abstaining from food and non-water drink for a set period of time to focus on God.

Have you considered fasting, or some other sort of “boost” in your spiritual practices in seasons of depression?

How might that look for you this week to lean further into God in the midst of your darkness?

(If you need help with this practice, check out the resources available on <https://rhythmsandformation.com/>)