



Walk in Hope

*Group Discussion Guide
Week of May 5, 2024*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CITIZENS BASICS

*Sunday, May 12 | 11am-11:45am
Dowd YMCA*

We offer Citizens Basics on the 2nd Sunday of every month for anyone who is new to the life of our church. This is a great chance to get more information about who we are as a church, as well as meet some of our pastors and leaders. Snacks and childcare is provided, but please register in advance.

FAMILY MEETING

*Saturday, June 1 | 4pm
Clanton Pavilion (3132 Manchester Dr, Charlotte, NC 28217)*

On Saturday, June 1st we will hold our semi-annual Family Meeting. This is a chance for us as a church to celebrate God's faithfulness, to commemorate what He is doing in our church, to worship together, and to look for what God might do in the months ahead.

This year, we are doing it church potluck style! Citizens will be providing pulled pork for dinner. If your last name starts with A-N bring a side, if O-Z bring a dessert to share!

MEMBERSHIP CLASS

*Sunday, June 9 | 2pm-5pm
Dowd YMCA*

We believe the church is central to all God is doing in the world. When you read the New Testament, wherever the gospel is proclaimed, people believe, disciples are made, and then churches are formed. When you put your faith in Jesus, you don't just get God as your Father, but you are now put in relationship with other Christians who are your brothers and sisters in Christ. This is why membership is so important. It's you committing to play your role in the larger family of God through a particular local congregation.

Our Membership Class is the first step towards membership at Citizens Church. If you're interested in becoming a member at Citizens, or just interested in finding out more about who we are, join us on Sunday, June 9th from 2pm-5pm.

VISION FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

Citizens Community Groups gather on a regular basis to help each other follow Jesus. When we gather for discussions like this one, our primary aim is not to simply talk about some good ideas or share our opinions, but to wrestle with the real state of our hearts and how to become doers of the Scriptures and followers of Jesus.

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 SCRIPTURES

Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11.

- ***What stood out to you from this text?***
- ***Was there something that comforted you or convicted you?***
- ***What does this text teach us about God?***
- ***What does this text teach us about ourselves?***

DISCUSS THE SERMON

In Sunday's teaching, we saw that the hope we have because of Christ's return means 3 things:

1. Hope is not speculative
2. Hope looks back (to the cross) and looks forward (to Christ's return)
3. Hope is for the here and now.

- ***How often do you spend time thinking about Christ's return in your everyday life? Is this an essential part of your theology/faith?***

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:13 and Revelation 21:1-8.

The promise of Christ's future return, where he ushers in a new and complete heaven and earth, means we can have hope in the here and now.

- ***What are some of your current struggles you are facing in your life (battles with sin, suffering, difficult circumstances)? How does the promise of Christ's return bring you hope in these various struggles?***

Read the following quote from St Francis of Assisi:

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.*

The journey of the Christian life is that we must die with Christ (that is die to ourselves, in humility) before we can experience the promise of resurrection hope with Him in the life to come.

- **What are some ways you can practically die to yourself to love God or love others this week?**

PRACTICE

Before closing the discussion time, we invite you as a group to take time (we would recommend 5 minutes) for silent prayer, asking the Lord these questions:

Would you help me trust in the promise that Christ is going to return and make all things new?

How do you wish to reframe my view of my struggles in light of the hope I have in Christ that He will return?

After praying through these questions, take time to discuss.

Leaders Note -- This can be done in large group or as a part of your Care + Prayer Time.