

THE COST OF AN ENCOURAGING FAITH

FLOURISHING GRACE SMALL GROUP CODE

Engagement:

Each person will get out of their small group what they put into the group. Make sure everyone in the group gets a chance to engage. If you tend to talk more than others be sensitive to how much you may dominate the conversation. If you tend to talk less make sure you work to speak up in your group. Your voice is valuable to others in your group and community; growth can't happen without engagement.

Confidentiality:

We long for our groups to be places of authentic community. The only way this happens is through vulnerable conversations in which we share personal parts of our lives and confess our sin together. Anything and everything that is shared in the group must stay in the group.

Speech:

We must fight against gossip, grumbling, and complaining. Our speech should build up our group not burden our group (Eph 4:29). We also must keep our conversation focused when our group meets. Groups gather to study the word and connect together please avoid personal rabbit trails or off topic subjects.

It takes more than one day and one person:

Small groups are about relationships. True relationships are not built by one person on one day a week. Step up to help your leader - they can't do it all alone. Everyone in the group should be serving the group - volunteer to host, volunteer to bring a snack, volunteer to give them a week off. Follow up and engage the members of your group during the week: one day a week does not build authentic community.

PRAY

Around the group have each person share one prayer request for the week.

Open a time of prayer inviting one person or the whole group (if they feel comfortable) to pray for the request of the group and for all of the new folk at Flourishing Grace and the Newcomers Dinner coming up.

BACKGROUND

In this section, Paul gives greater background to the story of how he received an update from the church in Thessalonica through Timothy. Paul continues to tell the followers of Jesus in Thessalonica why he, Silas, and Timothy are especially thankful for what God has done among the Thessalonians. Paul says that one of the

reasons the three of them wanted to return to Thessalonica so much was not just because they missed the people in that young church, but out of a deep concern over their faith in Jesus amidst great persecution. However, what Timothy reports back to Paul not only relieves his fears but gives him great encouragement to press on even in the midst of his own trials.

OPEN

Have a group member read **1 Thessalonians 3:1-13** aloud.

Who is someone—whether you know them personally or not—who inspires you to be a better person?

REFLECT

What was Paul worried had happened to the church in Thessalonica (3:1-5)?

What specifically did Paul ask Timothy to do in Thessalonica and what did he ask Timothy to report back with (3:2+5)?

What does Timothy find when he visited Thessalonica (3:6)?

How does this effect Paul, Timothy and Silas (3:7-9)?

APPLY

Based on this passage, what would you say to someone who says, “I don’t need church; my spiritual life is just between me and Jesus”?

Who is someone in your life—that you know personally—who intentionally encourages you in your daily relationship with Jesus?

Honest question: Is your relationship with Jesus something that encourages others? Why or why not?

CLOSE

What is one thing in this passage that stuck out to you personally and why?

DAILY DISCIPLESHIP

The following will help you take what you have learned and engage with your family, friends and coworkers this week. These conversation starters are designed for you to leverage opportunities this week to talk about how **“cost and encouragement are intertwined.”** Use them in your own time with God, to spark discussion during your family devotional, or just to talk about this topic with friends and coworkers who may not know Jesus.

Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13, then talk about these questions:

// Who is an encouragement in your life when things get tough?

// Agree or disagree: Christians often hold back from experiencing true community because we’re afraid to let down our walls and let people see some things in our lives that we’re not proud of.

// Do you have a group of people in your life who know you well—both the good and the bad—and who have permission to both encourage you and exhort you to do better when needed?

NEXT WEEK’S READING

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8