



LifeGroups Study Guide

Week #1, September 17, 2017: “Where Is God When I Need Him Most?”

1. **Connect**

Spend time checking-in with each other, sharing your highs and lows, joys and concerns, etc.

2. **Pray**

Pray with and for each other, remembering to lift up the highs and lows that were shared. Central to what LifeGroups is about is an intention to be a caring community for the sake of others, the community of Christ called to care for one another, grow in faith, and seek God’s guidance together.

3. **Embrace the Word**

Read Romans 8:26-39. Use different versions of the Bible to gain a broader sense of the reading. Share with each other what you hear in this reading – what catches your ear?

4. **Engage the Theme: Where Is God When I Need Him Most?**

(Copies of the sermon are available at the Information Center and at www.oslchurch.com.)

Share with each other what you heard in the sermon for the week. Did anything in particular grab your attention? Did anything surprise you? If you could ask the preacher anything about the sermon, what would it be?

5. **Discuss**

- Knowing what Mack went through, what are the emotions you think he’s feeling? Can you relate to Mack? Why or why not?
- Do you think Mack is fair in his conversation with Papa? Why or why not?
- What would you say if you had a chance to talk to God face-to-face?
- Is it okay to ask God your hardest, most troubling questions? Why or why not?
- What can you do to be better prepared to help others who are struggling with these questions?
- Why do you think God appeared to Mack as an African American woman in their early encounters? How comfortable were you with this personification of God?
- How do you picture God? What emotions does that personification of God evoke in you?
- In the Bible, God’s presence is made known in many ways (burning bush, pillar of cloud and fire, angels, a donkey). What’s more, Jesus was not what people were expecting in the Messiah, the chosen One of God. What does this tell us about God?

- What great question or burden is defining your life right now? How does it shape and guide your everyday thoughts, attitudes, and actions?

6. **Take Action (personal growth steps for the coming week)**

- Reflect on these quotes from Papa:

I am especially fond of you.

When all you see is your pain, you lose sight of me.

- Read and reflect on Romans 8:26-39.
- Select a small stone and carry it in your pocket. Each time you feel it in your pocket or take it out to look at, repeat Papa's message to yourself: "I am especially fond of you."
- Before Week 2, watch the movie *The Shack*.

7. **Wrap-up**

- Identify who will lead next week's discussion and where your group will meet.
- Pray as a group in a way that best fits the group's personality and preferences.
- Share a sign of peace with each other before you leave.