

## ***SMALL GROUP COVENANT***

*We agree to the following values:*

**Acceptance** - We will affirm one another's contributions.

**Confidentiality** - What is said in the group stays in the group.

**Openness** - As we are able, we will be open with each other.

**Refusal to Gossip** - We will only speak of those who are not present in a way that builds them up.

**Courtesy** - We will try to be on time if possible and make this group a priority. We will avoid distractions, such as texting or answering calls during small group.

**Accountability** - We will allow others to hold us accountable in areas that we need to grow.

**Safety** - We will create a safe environment where people can be heard. No quick answers or judgements.

**Dealing with Conflict** - If a conflict arises between us and another person, we will approach the person directly in a loving way.

I will try, with God's help, to uphold these values the best that I can.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Session 1—Where Are You God?

**Icebreaker** - Play a round of the “Would You Rather” card game

**Go over the attached Group Covenant together**

**Play the Video—Session 1**

1. In the video, Chris told the story of when Daniel was kidnapped and exiled to Babylon. He explained that Daniel asked tough questions of God. Read Daniel’s conversation with God below: What emotions do you sense that Daniel is feeling when he prays these words? What do you think he wanted most from God?

Daniel 9:19 (MSG) “Master, listen to us!  
Master, forgive us!  
Master, look at us and do something!  
Master, don’t put us off!  
Your city and your people are named after you:  
You have a stake in us!”

2. Do you think it’s ok to question God? Is it possible to question God, yet still have faith in him? Explain.
3. Why do you think God doesn’t always choose to answer our “why” questions?
4. The passage below is a song written by King David, whom God called “a man after my own heart.” How do you see him both questioning God and having faith in him at the same time?

## **Psalms 13:1-6**

- 1 O LORD, how long will you forget me? Forever?  
How long will you look the other way?
- 2 How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul,  
with sorrow in my heart every day?  
How long will my enemy have the upper hand?
- 3 Turn and answer me, O LORD my God!  
Restore the sparkle to my eyes, or I will die.
- 4 Don’t let my enemies gloat, saying, “We have defeated him!”  
Don’t let them rejoice at my downfall.
- 5 But I trust in your unfailing love.  
I will rejoice because you have rescued me.
- 6 I will sing to the LORD

5. Was there anything that stood out to you from Jared’s story in the video? Could you relate to him in any way?
6. Can you think of a time when you asked God “Why?” but weren’t satisfied with the answer? How did you respond?

7. In Daniel Chapter 9, we read that God did not rescue Daniel from exile in Babylon, but assured him that he was with him in his suffering.

Have you experienced a time when God did not take you out of a difficult situation, but you felt His presence with you in the midst of it? Explain.

8. Are you going through a difficult season right now that has led you to ask “Where are you, God?” How can this group support you?

9. Do you know someone who has been asking “Where are you, God?” How can you support them?

Take a few minutes to pray as a group for the questions you might be wrestling with. You can use the prayer below as a guide.

“God, I don’t understand why \_\_\_\_\_ . Help me to trust you even though it doesn’t make sense. Remind me that there is more to the story that I can’t see yet, and that you have been with me through it all. Thank you for your love that never changes. Amen.”

## Session 2—Waiting on God

**Icebreaker** - Play a round of the “Would You Rather” card game

### Play the Video—Session 2

1. Why do you think God so often asks us to wait?
2. How do you think our waiting on God is connected to our level of trust in Him?
3. In the video, Chris encouraged us to spend time listening to God when we are in a waiting season. Do you spend time listening to God regularly? If so, what does that most often look like for you?
4. The best way to hear from God is to read His words in the Bible. What have you read in the Bible recently? Did God speak anything to you through it?
5. Read the passage below from Psalm 40:

Psalm 40:

I waited patiently for the Lord to help me,  
and he turned to me and heard my cry.

2 He lifted me out of the pit of despair,  
out of the mud and the mire.

He set my feet on solid ground  
and steadied me as I walked along.

3 He has given me a new song to sing,  
a hymn of praise to our God.

Many will see what he has done and be amazed.  
They will put their trust in the Lord.

Based on this Psalm, what can we trust God to do for us when we wait on Him?

6. Did anything stick out to you from Ben and Ciera’s story? Could you relate in any way?
7. Can you recall a time when you were in a waiting season? What did you learn from that experience?
8. Is there a situation in your life in which you’re waiting on God right now? How can this group support you?
9. Who do you know that is in a waiting season and needs some encouragement? How could you reach out to them this week?

On a notecard or at the bottom of this handout, write down one thing you are waiting on God for. For example: a job, a spouse, a child, healing, financial freedom, a loved one to accept Jesus, peace, joy, rest, courage. Then hand the paper to the person on your right. Pray for the person whose paper you were given. You can use the prayer below as a guide:

Father, please help \_\_\_\_\_ to trust you as they wait on \_\_\_\_\_. Give them patience as they wait. As they quiet themselves and listen to you, speak words of hope to them. Open up their eyes to see what you want to speak to them through the Bible. And remind them that they are not alone in their waiting. Amen.

## *Session 3—Embracing God in the Valley*

**Icebreaker** - Play a round of the “Would You Rather” card game

### **Play the Video—Session 3**

1. Why do you think God allows us to go through valleys?
2. The Bible passage below was written by David, the greatest King of Israel, when he was in a valley season.

Psalm 23:4 Even when I walk  
through the darkest valley,  
I will not be afraid,  
for you are close beside me.  
Your rod and your staff  
protect and comfort me.

What brought David comfort when he was in the valley?

3. Chris said in the video that when we are in a valley, we should remember how God has helped us or others in the past. Is there a story that you can look back on to remind you of God’s faithfulness, whether in your own life or the life of someone else?
4. What are some practical ways that we can embrace God when we are in the valley?
5. Did anything stick out to you from Cindy’s story? Can you relate in any way?
6. Can you recall a time when you were in a “valley?” How did that season impact your faith?
7. Are you in a valley right now? How can this group pray for you?
8. God often uses other people to bring us comfort when we are in a valley. Is there someone you can turn to in a valley season that will remind you of God’s faithfulness?
9. Who do you know that is in a valley right now? How can you encourage them with a story of God’s faithfulness in your own life?

**Pray this prayer as a group by going around the circle - each person reading one line until you finish the prayer.**

Father God, we don't always understand

why you allow us to go through valleys,

Help us to trust you

even when it doesn't make sense.

Remind us of the times that you've come through for us in the past.

So that we can have courage to face the difficulties ahead of us.

Allow us to feel you close when we are in a valley.

To hear you through your whispers

and through your Word.

Give us the courage

to ask you the tough questions.

Rather than turn our backs on you.

Help us to keep taking steps forward

until we are through the valley.

And have made it safely to the other side.

If someone we know is in a valley right now

Give us the wisdom and the words to uplift them.

Thank you for the promise

that you will never leave us or forsake us.

And that your love never fails. Amen.