

Getting Started

Welcome to another week of our Online Connection Groups. It's our hope to get to know each other a bit better, support one another through this time, pray together, and discuss the scriptures using questions connected to last Sunday's sermon in the ["That You May Believe" series](#) on the [Gospel of John](#).

Hints: We do not provide a lot of space for your answers to these questions, so feel free to have a journal handy to write down your thoughts.

You aren't expected to have time for all of the questions during your online meeting. However, we do encourage you to reflect on them and jot down thoughts on your own.

Getting to Know Each Other *(Suggested time: 30 min)*

At the beginning of your group time, take a few minutes to get to know each other—have some fun!

- Share a little bit about your family or pets that you've had.
- What was a memorable event for you in 2019?
- What do you find most challenging about engaging with God's Word during this time?

Study Questions *(Suggested time: 40 min)*

Please complete these questions prior to your group's meeting time.

1) The High Priest, Caiaphas, shows his allegiance to Rome and desire for power in proclaiming, "one man (Jesus) should die for the people" (John 11:50).

- **Though his motive was selfish, what did Caiaphas accurately predict about Jesus' death?** (See also John 18:14, 11:52, 10:16)

- Read Romans 5:6-8, then describe in your own words what it means that Jesus died for you.

2) John often uses contrasts. In John 12:1-11, two distinct views of Jesus have developed as a result of Lazarus being raised from the dead: devout followers who saw Jesus as the Messiah contrasted by those who feared Jesus' ministry and planned to put an end to it.

- Why do you think following Jesus has such a polarizing effect – either quickly drawing others in or dramatically making them resistant to Him?

- Have you noticed times in your own life where you felt resistance to Jesus? What do you believe Jesus' heart was for you during that time?

3) Mary's gesture of anointing Jesus and wiping his feet with her hair was extravagant. In that day, it would have seemed scandalous to some. But not to Jesus.

- Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a.
- What qualities of love do you see demonstrated in Mary's sacrifice?

- Take time to reflect on a recent time when someone showed you extravagant love. *Share with your group if you feel comfortable.*

4) Judas's response (John 12:4-6) starkly contrasts Mary's extravagant love by showing the stingy selfishness of our human nature. This challenges us to examine our hearts and ask, "who do I most relate to in this scene?"

- **Reflect a bit on your relationship with your Savior.** *Maybe you are practically minded and selfishly considering the bottom line like Judas. Perhaps you are like everyone else at the party, weighing your devotion and waiting without adding to the conversation. Or just maybe your love for Jesus more closely resembles extravagant worship.*

- How would your life look different this week if you lived with the level of surrender Mary showed?

Prayer *(Suggested time: 10 min)*

Prayer is an important part of each Online Connection Group. Often those who are new to a group may be reluctant to pray aloud; others are so comfortable that they can unintentionally take over the prayer time. So, we have a few suggestions for these first few weeks as group members are becoming comfortable with one another.

- 1) **The Host Prays.** During discussion of the above questions, take note of the things people are sharing. As you are wrapping up your discussion offer to close in prayer and pray for each individual/couple according to what you have heard.
- 2) **Invite Short Prayer Requests.** Invite people to share a prayer request in 2-3 sentences. Write each request down. Invite others to pray for a request if they want to or just pray for the requests on your own.