

GROUP GUIDE

ROOTED WEEK 4 | WHERE IS GOD IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING

WELCOME & ICEBREAKER (20 MINUTES)

Give everyone some time to settle in - grab snacks, mingle, and then kick things off with an icebreaker! Use your Rooted question cards or the [icebreaker handout](#) in shared folder for ideas.

SHARE STORIES (15 MINUTES).

Have the two people you assigned to share their story do so tonight. Give them 3-5 minutes worth of time. They can use the "My Story" card as an outline.

Once one person has shared their story, thank them for sharing and invite the group to speak aloud together this prayer, **"God, thank you for your unfolding story in _____ life."** Repeat this for the next person who shares their story.

Let the group know that you will skip stories during week five to allow more time for the Strongholds experience.

INTRODUCE TOPIC & TRANSITION TO DISCUSSION (10 MINUTES)

Briefly introduce the topic for tonight's discussion (**consider inviting someone to read the introduction paragraph from this week's daily work included below**).

In Rooted this week, we will examine one of the most common questions people have when considering faith in God: If this is God's world and He is good, powerful, and loving, why is there so much pain and suffering? People in the Bible, such as David, wrestled with the same questions. We can find comfort in suffering by receiving hope and comfort from God, recognizing that God often answers prayers in unexpected ways, and that our suffering can help us grow in Christ-like character.

- When you were a kid, did your parents ever make you give up something that was yours and you knew it was not fair, but had to do it anyway? (Or maybe speak from a parent's perspective)

DISCUSS ROOTED WEEK 3 DEVOTIONALS (30-40 minutes).

Guide the group through a discussion of the following questions. Don't feel the need to answer them all; be willing to discern where God is leading the group and guide the conversation accordingly.

- Where have you seen God at work in your life recently?
- Do you find it easy or hard to trust God? Why?
- What did you notice as you spent time memorizing Philippians 4:6-7?



- What did God teach you this week as you interacted with the reading?
- What is one way God is inviting you to grow or change from this week's reading?

EXTENDED PRAYER (25 minutes)

The biblical response to suffering is prayer and lament. A "lament" is a passionate expression of grief or sorrow.

Read Psalm 13 aloud.

- Invite the group to notice how David expresses his grief and frustration but also his continued trust in God.
- Have everyone read Psalm 13 again, *on their own, silently*, and reflect on areas of their life where suffering is present. ASK: What do you want God to do?
- After about five minutes of silence (or longer if your group needs it), transition to the next prayer movement.

Pray Your Requests

- Invite the group to break into groups of 3-4.
- Rather than sharing requests out loud to one another and *then* praying for them, each person is encouraged to speak their request directly to the Father in the presence of their brothers and sisters.
- After one person has prayed, others can join in and affirm their prayer or share their own request.

REVIEW NECESSARY LOGISTICS (10 minutes)

- Confirm the details of the prayer experience (if it hasn't yet been completed).
- Remind everyone of the details of the Serve Experience and debrief (and that there will be no childcare).
- Introduce Week 5 Devotions – There is an Enemy, and the memory verse.
 - Explain that the devotions are more intensive this week and may take more time.
 - Next week we will begin by meeting together and then split into groups (men and women) to share about our strongholds (areas of sin in our lives where our flesh and Satan have worked together to create destructive patterns).
 - Bring their attention to Day 5 and the Sharing of Strongholds exercise and remind them to come prepared to share. Everyone will be asked to share from their exercise.

CLOSE IN PRAYER (5 minutes)

Pray or invite someone to close your time together with a final prayer.

