

## **Growth Group Leader's Guide**

For the Week of May 2-8, 2010  
"Is There Any Hope?"

### **Announcements:**

- Finalize your Group Covenant and have group members sign it. Once you have it signed, please send Pastor Larry a copy.
- It's not too early to begin discussing a service project and/or a group social for the end of the Spring Quarter. If you need ideas, please contact Pastor Larry.
- Please email your attendance and a brief summary of your meeting each week to [pastorlarry@ccsalem.org](mailto:pastorlarry@ccsalem.org).

### **Homework:**

Before your Growth Group meets, take about 20 minutes on your own to complete the following...

Read Romans 5:1-11. What does this passage say about hope? What is the basis for our hope? How is hope produced? What is the connection between hope and rejoicing?

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### **Growth Group Discussion Questions:**

The following questions are to be discussed when your Growth Group meets this week.

**My Story:** What one thing do you want your obituary to say about you? Why?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Psalm 42. This psalm consists of a lament (verses 1-4) followed by a statement of hope (verse 5) and a second lament (verses 6-10) followed by a second statement of hope (verse 11).

- What symptoms of depression (a "downcast soul") did the psalmist report experiencing? (*Soul thirst, verse 1-2; tears, verse 3; feeling overwhelmed, verse 7; physical pain, verse 10*)

- Why is a panting deer a good metaphor for depression? (*Times of depression can leave us very dry, thirsty and desperate for God*)
- How could listening to a waterfall reinforce a depressed or melancholy state of emotions? (*The idea of waves, breakers, and falling water overwhelming you. There is a feeling of hopelessness and drowning that is associated with depression*)
- What things was the psalmist depressed about? (*The mocking of others saying that God is absent, verse 3; Remembering times of joy, thanksgiving, and celebration in the past compared to the pain and despair of the present, verse 4; Feeling forgotten by God and being oppressed by the enemy, verse 9; His foes taunting him while he is suffering, verse 10*)
- What was the psalmist's hope for the future? (*God is his savior, verses 5 and 11; God's love and presence, verse 8*)
- How did he cope in the darkness of the nighttime? (*Singing and prayer, verse 8*)

**Living It:**

1. In what ways has your relationship with Jesus made a difference in how you handle injustice, oppression, and times of depression? (*You might want to review Ecclesiastes 3:16-4:3*)
2. What did you learn from your homework or Pastor Larry's message that you are going to put into practice when life seems unjust, wicked, or full of despair?
3. What worship song or hymn have you found to be uplifting during a difficult time in your life? Why?

*(Suggestion: If you have someone who can play the guitar or piano, you may want to sing a chorus or hymn together as a group. If not, you could use the words of a chorus or hymn as a prayer to prayer together)*

