

DISCUSSION:

Discuss the question cluster below

(As much or as little as works for your group and in any order you like)

Feel free to break off into smaller groups if it helps you share more personally

We're in a sermon series called, "Belonging." In it we'll focus on the parable of the prodigal sons in Luke 15. The parable is a story meant to change our lives. It shows us *who* belongs to God, *how* we belong to him (and each other), and what's truly valuable to God. The hope is that through increasingly knowing that we truly belong to God and to each other, we will increasingly thrive.

I. This week, our passage (Luke 15:1-3, 11-36) focused on the younger son leaving home and the ways we leave the belonging we have with God for something else. The sermon focused on: 1) What does it mean to leave? (v.12-13); 2) Why do we leave? (v.13); 3) What happens when we leave? (v.14-16); and 4) Why does the Father let him leave? Through this we discovered that leaving involves both wanting *and* rejecting; that we leave because we listen to the loud voices that frighten, deceive and shame us into leaving; that only God welcomes us when we can't buy our way into belonging; and that God will not be moved from playing the role of our rescuer, even if it means letting us kill him. Let's discuss how these things impact our lives.

A. What connected with you from the sermon or from the passage?

B. Do you think of yourself as a younger son type? Or are you more naturally an 'older son' type?

Remember: we all play both at various times, but we all likely have a tendency

C. Do you ever hear those voices like the younger son may have heard? Voices that tell you: *'You're missing something really important apart from God; you're not good enough to just receive belonging; you have to look out for yourself and do it yourself'?*

1. *When do you tend to think/hear things like that? At work? With friends? Relationships? At church?*

2. *What's hard to believe about belonging really being a free gift God gives to you without you bringing ANYTHING to the table at all?*

3. *What would you have to give up – or trust in – to let God give you belonging without any strings attached?*

D. In what ways do you need to slow down, rather than just reaching to those accusations and fears you hear being played up?

1. *How might God be inviting you to listen more for his gentle, quiet voice, rather than the loud, demanding voices that tell us we're not enough?*

2. *What help do you need from God to do that?*