

## Message Discussion Guide

**Date: April 13-14, 2024**

**Title: Podcast Focus Group**

### Connect with Each Other:

#### Icebreakers

- Are you an extrovert or an introvert?
- Do you have a favorite worship song?

#### Pray Together

Heavenly Father, we come to you with reverence. We know that we fall short but we are thankful that you are a loving and forgiving Father. Although we experience anxiety and problems in this world, we know that you are always there for us and we thank you for your faithfulness in your promises to us. We ask that when we encounter anxiety that you help guard our hearts and minds and give us strength to get through those moments. We ask that you help guide us to fellowship with others so we may work in community through those troubles. We pray that we find ways to carry out our purpose in serving others and allow that to help heal others as well as ourselves. We lift all this up in the name of Jesus. Amen.

### Connect with God:

#### Key Bible Verses

**Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)** - Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

**Psalms 139:23-24 (NLT)** - Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

## **Message Summary**

This week's message included many stories woven together and discussed by Pastor Mark, Pastor Darryl, and Pastor James. Some of the big ideas were:

- Anxiety may sometimes go from an occasional emotion to a constant frame of mind. It can become almost crippling.
- We can get the mistaken idea that we can solve our anxiety and it will go away forever. That is a lie and if we believe that lie, it can be discouraging when we do experience anxiety.
- Worry and anxiety are sometimes manifested in the area of our life where we trust God the least.
- The enemy tries to convince us that God will not accept us or love us when we are in a state of anxiety. This is a lie. Don't be ashamed of being anxious, instead ask God to be there with you and help you with it.
- When we punish ourselves for feeling anxious, it can further separate us from God. God accepts and loves us as we are, including when we are anxious.
- We think we need to get away from everyone when we feel anxious, but isolation can be the poison that makes our anxiety worse.
- Prayer is important in dealing with anxiety. However, we sometimes treat prayer as a way to solve our external problems, but God intended prayer as a way to settle our soul. God doesn't promise to fix our external problems, he promises to guard our hearts and minds. If we start down the false road of thinking our faith will solve our problems, we will get discouraged and think our faith is weak when we have problems or anxiety.
- When we do have problems, it is a closer relationship with God that helps us go through those problems.
- When we learn to not think about ourselves and instead think of others, it can interrupt our anxiety. Purpose is an antidote to anxiety.

## **Discussion Questions**

1. In what areas of your life do you experience anxiety? What do you think causes it in some areas of your life and not others?
2. There was a discussion of "anxiety creep" - i.e., having anxiety spread from one area of your life to another. Have you ever experienced this?
3. Do you feel like withdrawing when you feel anxiety? What did Pastor Mark mean

when he said that isolation can be a poison that makes our anxiety worse?

4. How can we get closer to God in times of anxiety?
5. How can purpose be an antidote to anxiety?
6. What other insights did you get from this week's message?

**GOD KNOWS OUR ANXIETY AND HE WILL HELP US THROUGH IF WE SURRENDER TO HIM**



**SEARCH ME, O GOD, AND KNOW MY HEART; TEST ME AND KNOW MY ANXIOUS THOUGHTS. POINT OUT ANYTHING IN ME THAT OFFENDS YOU, AND LEAD ME ALONG THE PATH OF EVERLASTING LIFE.  
- PSALM 139:23-24 (NLT)**