

GRATITUDE SUNDAY

Week 1 - November 29

WORSHIP

Read Psalm 30 aloud. Take a moment to reflect on God's Word and center in Him.

FELLOWSHIP

Who is the most grateful or joyful person you know?

DISCUSSION

1. What does it mean to be thankful?
2. Respond to this description of gratitude by Christine Pohl:

*"Gratitude involves knowing that we are held secure by a loving God, and that the God we worship is trustworthy, despite the nearly unbearable sorrow we might encounter along the way (Psalm 13). A capacity to be thankful in the midst of hard times requires acknowledging that we do not know the whole story, that we are living before it is complete, and that we are thankful for the presence of God and faithful persons in our lives. Gratitude is a crucial way in which death and destruction do not have the final word, and cannot finally define us."*¹

- Why do we need to practice being thankful, especially in hard times?
- What does gratitude have to do with death and destruction not having "the final word"?

3. Paul instructs us to "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Spend the rest of your discussion time practicing giving thanks to God. Invite each person to share what they are thankful for this year. Consider these questions to get the ball rolling:

- How has God blessed you this year?
- What growth have you noticed in yourself, your small group, or in others close to you?
- Is there a way you can see God at work in a difficult situation or relationship?
- What does the gift of new life in Christ mean to you?
- How will you carry a spirit of thankfulness into this week? Consider writing in a gratitude journal each morning, turning to God in prayer when you feel entitled or envious or ungrateful, or letting someone know what you appreciate about them.

PRAYER

Ask for prayer requests; try to remember any needs that came up during the fellowship or discussion time. Check in on requests from last week, if you can. Does anyone have a practical need that another group member may be able to help with?

Pray for group, church, and community needs. Thank God for all the blessings that were shared during your discussion time.

¹ Christine D. Pohl, *Living into Community: Cultivating Practices That Sustain Us* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012), 26.