

Discussion Guide Week 9 | Pastor Ron Carpenter

MESSAGE SUMMARY

God desires to build a house that reflects His original design. A place where His presence is experienced, heaven and earth connect, and His people become a life-giving community. The early church in Acts demonstrated a church culture marked by miracles, prayer, fellowship, community, giving, and worship.

We are described as living stones being built into a spiritual house and a holy priesthood. That means we each have a responsibility to contribute to the life of God's house. We are called to be people who bring life to others, allow God's Word to challenge and transform us, and offer worship that comes from a genuine relationship with Him. [1 Peter 2:4-9]

OPEN IN PRAYER & DISCUSS

BE A LIVING STONE AND BRING LIFE TO OTHERS

We're people who attend church; we are living stones being built together into a spiritual house. Every person has the opportunity and responsibility to bring life, encouragement, love, and connection to those around them. What may seem like a small interaction could be exactly what someone needs to make it through their week.

- What does it mean to be a "living stone" rather than simply someone who attends church? How does this change the way you approach gathering with other believers? What responsibility do you have toward the people around you?
- A simple greeting, smile, handshake, or encouraging word can make a significant difference. Have you ever experienced a small act of kindness that had a bigger impact than the person probably realized? What did it mean to you?
- How can we become more intentional about building genuine community instead of simply sitting next to one another? What would it look like if everyone in our group took responsibility for making sure others felt welcomed, encouraged, and supported?



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ALLOW GOD'S WORD TO DISRUPT AND TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

Jesus was not only a gatherer; He was a disruptor. He challenged the culture, confronted wrong thinking, and called people to live differently. God's Word is not meant to adjust itself to fit our preferences. Our lives are meant to move toward His Word. A genuine encounter with God should produce change that is visible beyond Sunday and carried into everyday life.

- Jesus challenged people's thinking, behaviors, and expectations. Why do you think we sometimes prefer a version of Jesus who makes us comfortable than one who challenges us? What might we miss when we only want God to affirm our way?
- Pastor Ron said, "The Word of God is the only truth in the earth. So when it is spoken, my life must move toward it. It doesn't move toward me." What does this statement mean in practical terms? Are there areas where it can be tempting to adjust Scripture to fit our preferences instead of allowing Scripture to shape us?
- Sometimes there can be a disconnect between our Sunday encounters with God and our Monday - Saturday lives. What are some ways we can make sure what we receive on Sunday influences how we treat the people we encounter throughout the week?

STAY CONNECTED TO GOD

Everything must remain connected to the environment that sustains it. A plant needs the ground, a fish needs water, and a branch needs the vine. In the same way, we must remain connected to God to be sustained and release the potential He has placed within us. Praise and worship are not just parts of a church service; they are expressions of our relationship with God and an environment where His presence dwells.

- What does it look like in everyday life to stay connected to God? What are some things that can slowly pull our attention away from Him?
- Praise can be an outward expression, while worship flows from intimacy and relationship with God. How would you describe the difference between participating in worship and genuinely connecting with God?
- We should bring praise regardless of whether we are experiencing our best week or our worst week. What can help you maintain a heart of gratitude and worship when life is difficult?



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CLOSING

God is building a house made up of people who carry His presence and reflect His character. We are living stones, called to bring life and encouragement to others. We are also called to allow God's Word to challenge us, correct us, and transform the way we live. We must remain connected to Him daily, developing a lifestyle of praise, worship, and gratitude. When we come together as God's people, we should create an environment where others experience His love, His presence, and His life.

GROUP CHALLENGE

Take a few minutes for everyone in the group to identify one practical way they can bring life to someone else this week.

- Think of someone who may be discouraged, isolated, overwhelmed, or in need of encouragement.
- Share one specific action you can take to encourage that person.
- As a group, take time to pray for those individuals and ask God to help you become more aware of the people around you who need encouragement.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

This week, strengthening your connection with God outside of Sunday.

- Start with praise: Begin each morning by thanking God before allowing your circumstances or schedule to set the tone for your day.
- Stay in the Word: Identify one area of your life where God's Word is challenging you to think or live differently. Take one step toward obedience.
- Bring life: Intentionally encourage at least one person each day through a kind word, a message, prayer, or meaningful interaction.
- Make worship personal: Spend time worshiping God without depending on music, a church service, or someone else to lead you into it.

THANK GOD & CLOSE IN PRAYER