

Not Alone: God's Relentless Pursuit

Group Discussion Guide | July 5

Series overview and leader instructions

“Not Alone” is an 11-week journey through the Old Testament, tracing God’s desire to dwell with His people and His faithful work to bring redemption. Through every season—deliverance, provision, rebellion, exile, and restoration—we see one unified story of grace, pointing to Jesus and the promise of God dwelling with His people forever.

The sermons in this series will take a fly-over, covering multiple chapters—and sometimes multiple *books*—in a single sermon. You may find that some people in your group may be unfamiliar with these stories and benefit from some additional context.

We recommend incorporating videos from The Bible Project books of the Bible overview videos as needed. As the leader, you can decide whether to watch the videos as a group or send them out in your group chat or via email for people to watch on their own, or some combination of the two.

For this week, consider watching Bible Project’s video on EXILE at the link below:

- [EXILE VIDEO](#)

Or you can also watch either of the following overview videos of Daniel and Esther:

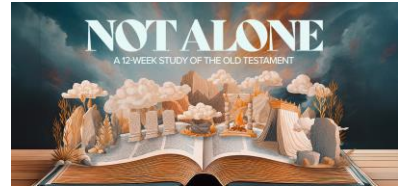
- [Daniel overview](#)
- [Esther overview](#)

As always, use the group discussion guide below in a way that works best for *your* group. Linger on questions that yield fruitful discussion. Break into pairs or smaller groups for conversation or keep the discussion in the larger group. You know your group! Use this guide as a template but make it your own.

Opening reflection questions (10 minutes).

Begin your time together by inviting people to share their answers to the following:

- When have you felt out of place, like you didn’t fully belong?



- Have you been on vacation somewhere and somehow became aware that you don't understand the culture of that place – a misunderstanding or faux pas? Bonus points if it's embarrassing!

Discuss the sermon (35 minutes)

- What stood out or challenged you from the sermon?
- Did you learn something new about the stories of Esther or Daniel that changed the way your perspective?

Daniel shows faithfulness by continuing ordinary obedience under pressure and threat. Esther shows faithfulness by stepping into costly action when the moment requires it.

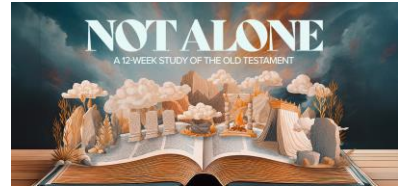
- Which kind of faithfulness – ordinary obedience or costly action – have you typically identified with more?
- Which kind of faithfulness feels more difficult for you right now?

The sermon connects Daniel to Jesus: leaving home, becoming a foreigner, being tested, trusting God, going down into the lions' den, and coming out to transform everything. It also connects Esther to Jesus: leaving safety, risking life, identifying with her people, advocating for them, defeating the adversary, and bringing salvation.

- How do Daniel and Esther help you see Jesus more clearly?
- What encourages you about knowing that Jesus is not only our example of faithfulness, but also our Savior, advocate, and way home?

In the sermon, three considerations were pointed out about living as exiles: a different story, a different ethic, and a different authority.

- **Different story:** What story (success, security, comfort, outrage, fear, self-protection, etc.) are you most tempted to live inside other than God's story?
- **Different ethic:** Daniel relied on regular prayer; Esther received wise counsel from someone she trusted. What ordinary practices help form us as faithful exiles (i.e. prayer, fasting, community, integrity, worship, service, hospitality, generosity)?
- **Different authority:** Where do you most feel the tension between Jesus as Lord and your own preferred way, your culture's values, or the pressure of others?



Read Jeremiah 29:4–14. This is part of a letter written by the prophet Jeremiah to the people of Israel at the beginning of their exile. It provided guidance for them, and it provides guidance for us today.

- What stands out to you about God’s instructions to His people in exile?
- What surprises you about being told to seek the good of the city where they had been carried into exile?
- What would it look like for us to “build houses and plant gardens” — to practice ordinary faithfulness — in the places God has put us?
- Where are you tempted either to assimilate into the culture around you or withdraw from it entirely?
- How does this passage help us imagine a third way: faithful presence?

Closing Prayer

As you move into prayer time, **read this promise from Jesus in John 14:1-4.**

Take a moment of silence to answer this question in prayer. What part of Jesus’ promise do you most need to hold onto in this season?

Then have someone pray aloud for courage to live faithfully while headed home.