

## Group Discussion Guide: Dear Church | September 11, 2022

### Begin with prayer (10 minutes).

Like last week, use the **Prayer of Humility** below to help center your time together on God. To do so, send the prayer out to your group (via text, email, GroupMe, etc.) so everyone has access to it. Then, give your group a few moments to pray in silence and respond to the prompts.

“Lord, I ask that You would prepare my heart for our meeting today.”

“Help me to see each member as You see them.”

*Recall the name and face of each individual in the group.  
Ask for God’s help to see each one for who they are, without judgment.*

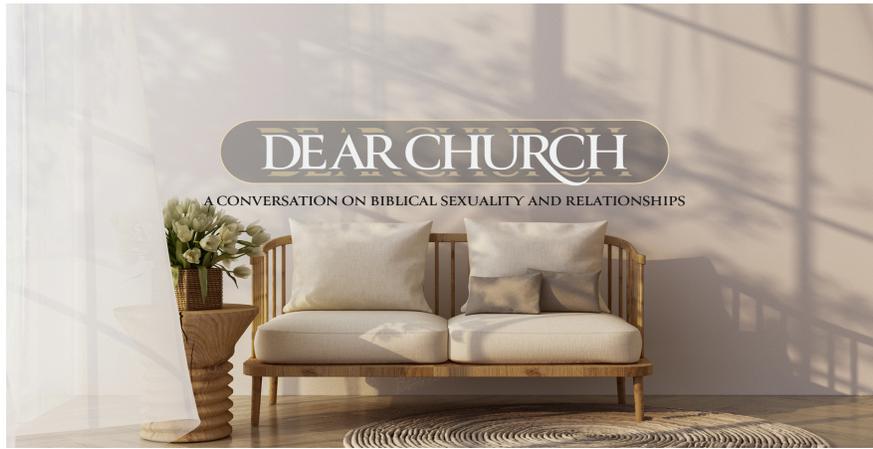
“Help me to hear each member in truth.”

*As you think of each individual, ask God for the ability to listen intently.  
Acknowledge any personal struggles or personality conflicts with others.  
Talk these struggles or conflicts over with God.  
Ask for a way to listen without hindrance.*

“Help me to respond in love.”

*Affirm your desire for God to guide the meeting.  
Admit your limitations to fix the problems and struggles of others.  
Acknowledge your inability to fully understand any one person’s story.  
Ask God to draw each member closer to His love through the meeting.*

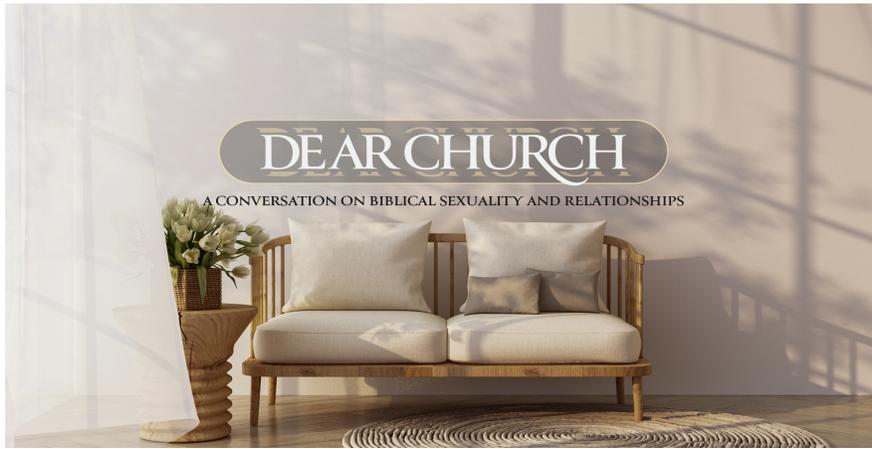
Once you’ve finished praying, as the host, pray aloud for your group time.



**Read Scripture and debrief the sermon (30 minutes).**

*Select a few of these questions to help you discuss the sermon. You may even come up with a few questions that would be good for your specific group to discuss.*

- Like last week, what is your posture like coming into this discussion of gender? Do you sense openness in yourself? Are you feeling closed-off? Explain.
- How proximal is this specific conversation to your own life? Do you have friends or family members that identify as part of the LGBT+ community? How does your level of proximity to this topic affect how you come to this conversation?
- When you walk in the doors of The Creek, you most likely walk under a large sign that says, “Welcome Home.” What, in your mind, is the ideal picture of welcoming people home as it pertains to this conversation?
- When was a time in your own life you didn’t feel at home in a church or in your family because of differences? What was that like?
- How can remembering what that isolation felt like help you welcome anyone who looks, thinks, or acts differently than you?
- **Read Genesis 2:7.** According to this passage, what two elements comprise the makeup of humans?
- **Read Genesis 3.** In what ways do you see alienation taking place in this chapter? Think specifically alienation between humans and God, between people, between humans and the land, between humans and their work, and between persons and their bodies? In which of these areas do you see the same kind of alienation in your own life?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.** In this passage, how does Paul describe the body? How does he say we are to treat the body? Why does he say these things?
- How do these passages apply to the conversation about the trans community?
- When thinking about this sermon, what was something new or challenging for you? What questions did this message raise for you?
- What do you think love requires of us as we engage either presently or in the future with people in the trans community?



**Take some time to talk through this case study together and answer the questions that follow (30 minutes).**

### **CHRIS' STORY**

Chris finally got up the courage to walk into church for the first time this Sunday. Chris is biologically male, but since middle school has experienced intense gender dysphoria. Chris sought counseling for years but began identifying and presenting as female several years ago, which included dressing as a woman and preferring female pronouns. Chris began gender reassignment about three weeks ago. Chris wears a dress and heels to church. Chris has felt throughout life like something is missing and just assumed it was the wrestling with gender and not a desire for relationship with God. Chris' family has not been supportive of the gender transition. None of them have any relationship with God, but they've struggled with shame and embarrassment over Chris' choices. Chris works as a makeup artist at a local beauty supply chain. This week, for whatever reason, Chris decided to finally come to church. It's been a thought for a long time, but this is the first time there's been enough courage to take action. Now Chris is sitting next to you.

- What are some significant aspects of Chris' story that you should think through?
- How should you be (or what should you do or not do) as you have conversations with Chris?
- What do the next steps of discipleship look like for Chris?
- How do you help Chris feel welcomed and loved by God?

**Come back together as a large group. Finish with intercessory prayer (10 minutes).**

Like each week, finish your group session with prayer. You might designate someone in your group to write down everyone's prayer requests and then send them to the whole group for everyone to be praying about through the week.

- What is on your heart that you need prayer for?
- Who in your life needs prayer?

Have someone close your time together by interceding for the requests that were shared.