

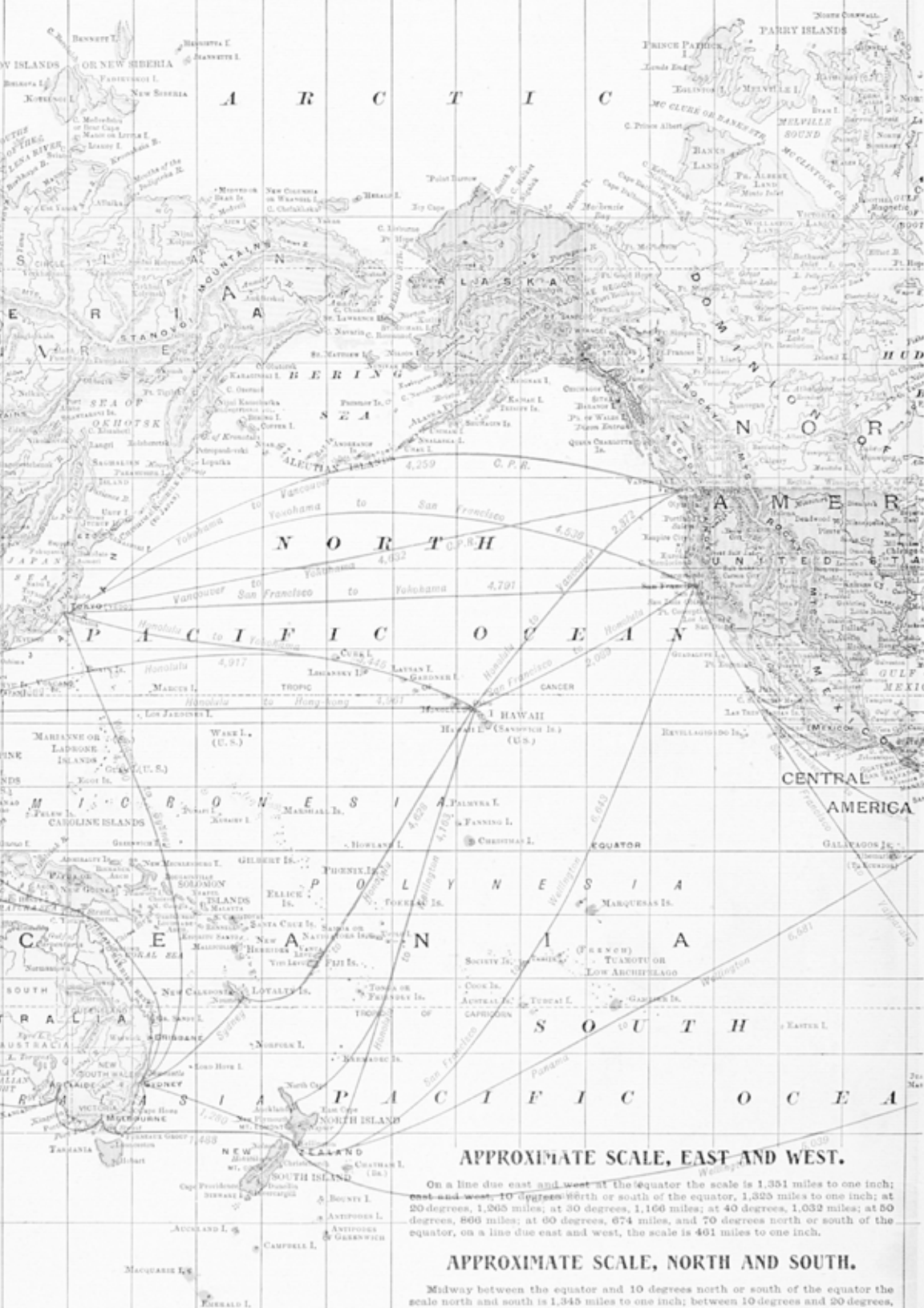


**RIVER VALLEY CHURCH**  
*Rob Ketterling*

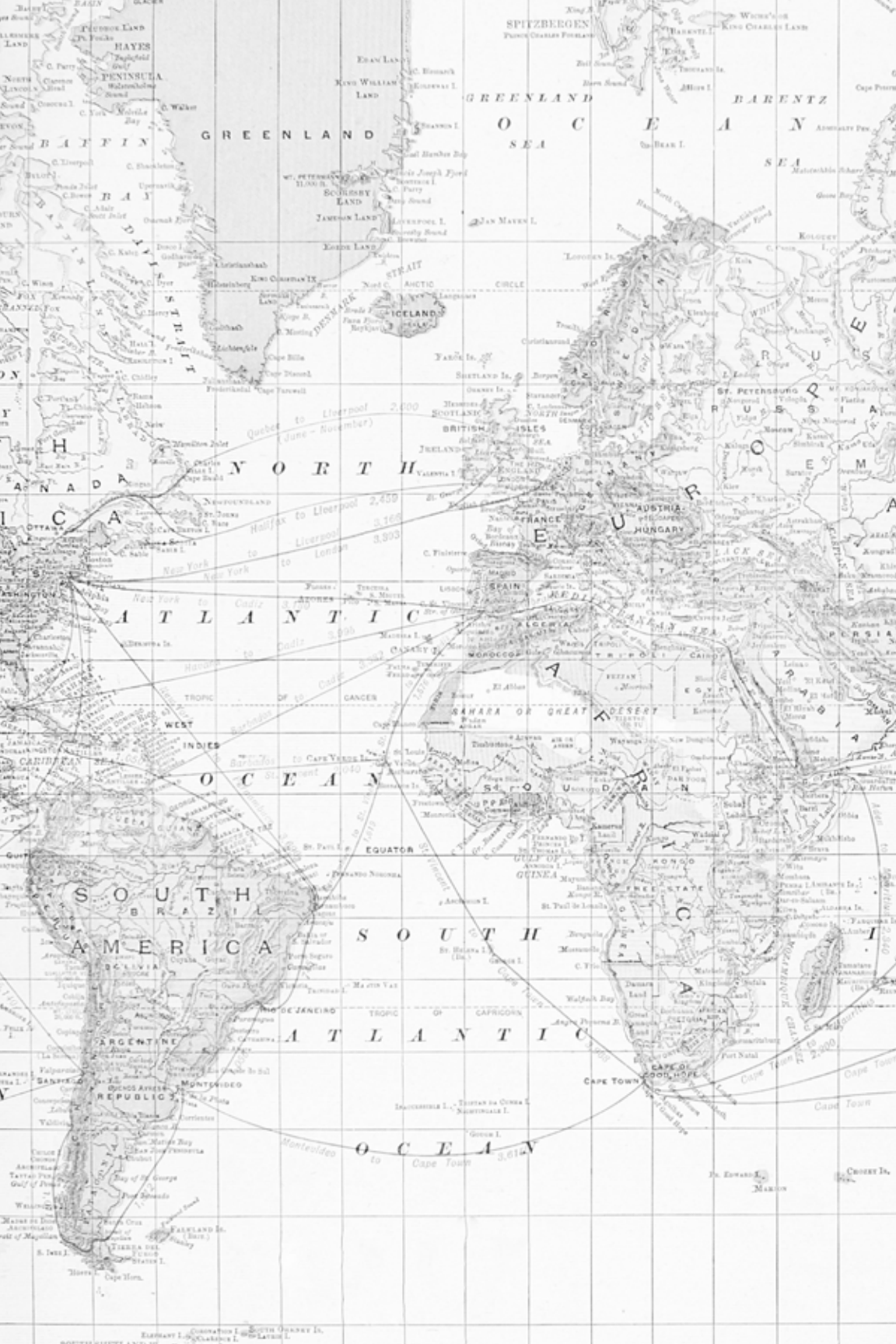
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**EXPLORING GOD'S COMMISSION**  
*A River Valley Church Lifegroup Series*



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Published by River Valley Church

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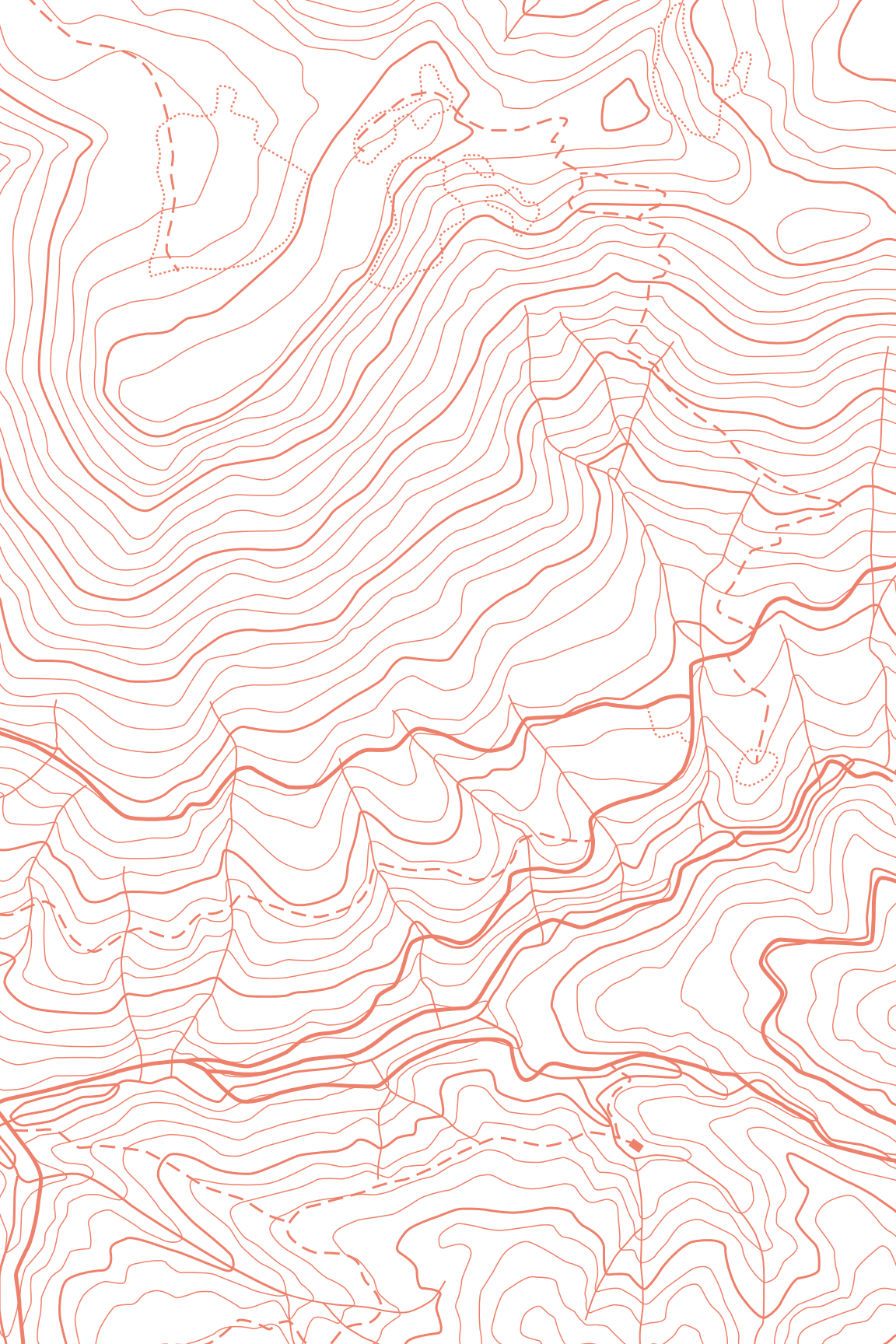
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*Therefore, go and make disciples of all the  
nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit.*

---

**MATTHEW 28:19**



*Rob & Becca Ketterling*

# WELCOME

*Rob Ketterling, Lead Pastor*  
River Valley Church

---

I am thankful that you've decided to join us for GO. It is my hope and prayer that this study will foster unity, align hearts and inspire us all to participate in fulfilling God's Great Commission.

In Matthew 28:18-19 Jesus tells His disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, Go!" It has always been God's will to reconcile people to Himself—people of every tongue and tribe and nation. We all have a part to play in that mission.

Over these six weeks, we'll explore key parts of the book of Matthew and examine how God's heart is woven into the Church's mission, our group's mission and our own personal mission.

We are in for an adventure! Through this study and the relationships you develop in your group, I'm confident you will be encouraged and challenged. Open your hearts and minds. Listen to what God is saying to you through the Bible, because God is at work in you and in each person in your group!

**THE BEST IS YET TO COME**

# TIPS FOR USING THIS BOOK



## 1.

Use this workbook as a guide, not a straightjacket. If your group responds to the lesson in an unexpected but honest way, go with that. If you think of a better question than one laid out in the discussion, ask it.

## 2.

If you are leading or co-leading a GO group, the leader section in the back of this book will give you some valuable tips and encouragement as you lead.

## 3.

Check out the “Session Outline” section so you will understand how the sessions and discussions will flow.

## 4.

Enjoy your group! Have fun connecting and growing together.

**SESSION**

*Outline*

## OPEN UP

This kicks off the group discussion and helps everybody open up on the same page.

## TUNE IN

As a group you will tune in to a weekly video teaching that lays the foundation for the rest of the session.

## GO DEEP

If this group was a five-course meal, this would be the main entrée. Here you will go deep, looking at Scripture and sharing personal insights. This is where the small group magic happens! The group may not use all of the questions and content - think of them as guiding the group along the journey. Ultimately, it's the process of growth you will value most!

## PRAY OVER

Pray over the intersection of this topic and your lives. Encourage the group to share prayer requests and pray for each other's needs during the session and throughout the week.

## BUILD ON

This is where you build on the discussion and bring real life application to the week's content. You will take what's in your head and connect it to your heart. Hold on tight for the ride, you can expect a few laughs and a lot of growth as this study comes alive and you discover what it means to participate in the Great Commission.

# GROUP

*Agreement*



We commit to show up at the appointed meeting times and to begin and end on time. When we cannot attend, we will contact the leader to let him/her know.

We will come ready to fully participate in our group.

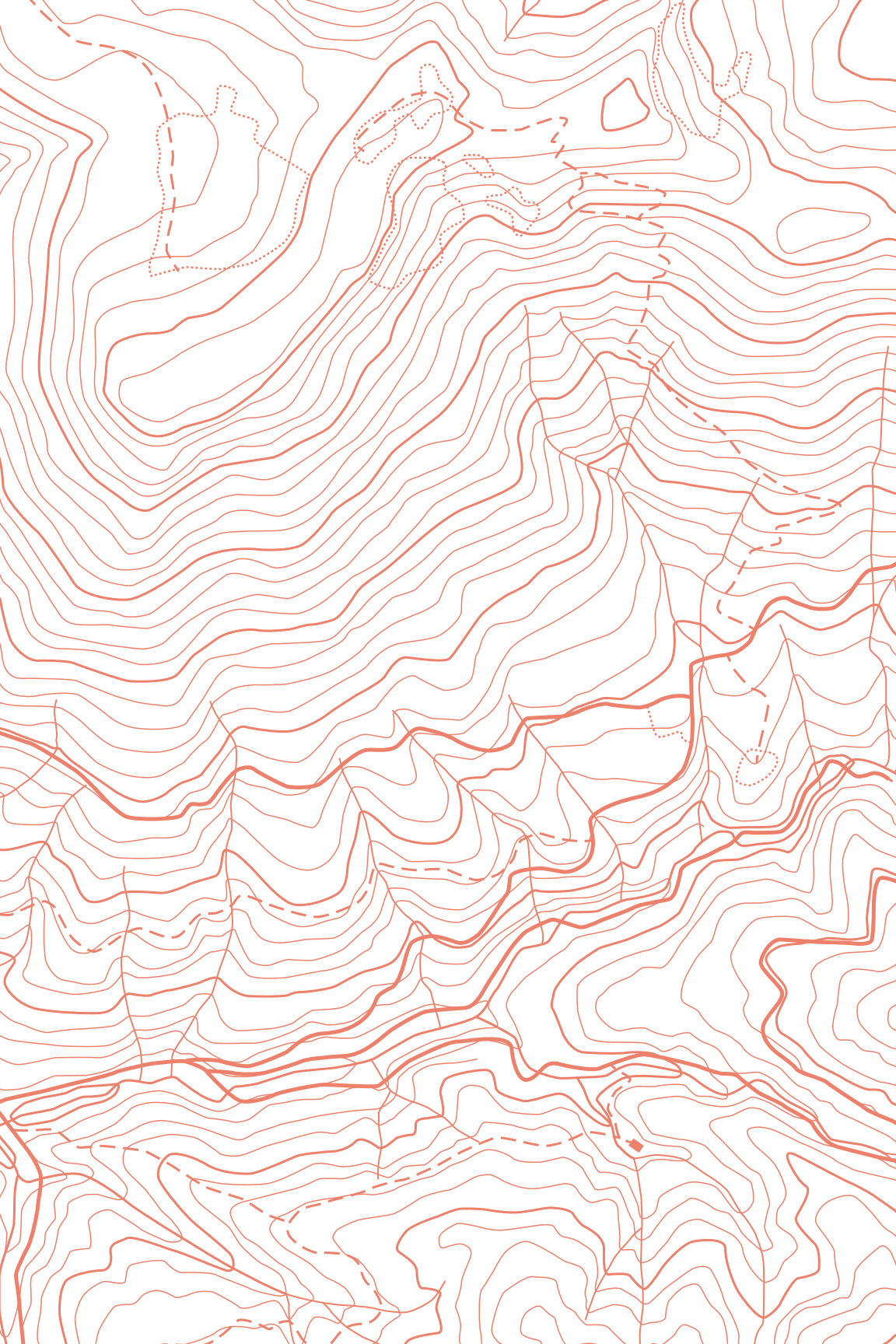
We will be sensitive to not dominate group discussions and commit to actively listen when others are talking.

We will study and discuss Scripture in a way that builds up others and brings application to our own lives. We will refuse to judge another person.

We commit to foster community by maintaining confidentiality. What is said in the group stays in the group, unless permission to share has been given by those involved. *(Note: If it is determined that a person is in danger of hurting themselves or someone else, an appropriate Pastor must be notified to help.)*

We will avoid offensive statements and jokes and instead look for opportunities to speak life-giving encouragement to one another.

We commit to resolve any conflict with someone by working it out directly with that person according to Matthew 18.





## *Introduction to GO*





# OPEN UP

---

Take this time for introductions. Even though some of you may already know each other, make sure all the group members have a chance to share!

Have everyone in the group share their name and answer three of the following questions:

1. *Where did you grow up?*
2. *What brought you to our church? How long have you attended?*
3. *Did you go to college or post-secondary education? If so, what for?*
4. *What is your dream vacation?*
5. *What is one thing you are looking forward to in the next month?*
6. *What is your favorite book?*
7. *Where is your favorite place to hang out?*

Now that you are acclimated, take time to share your hopes and feelings for this GO study:

1. *Why did you join a GO group?*
2. *What is one thing you are hoping to discuss regarding the Great Commission?*
3. *What is an area in which you hope to see personal growth by the end of this series?*

Take some time to walk through the Group Agreement (on page 18) together. Discuss any questions you may have.

# PRAY OVER

---

Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

During the course of this series, we encourage you to pray for a different unreached people group around the world each day. Each week, we will be reminded to connect with [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), pray for an unreached people group each day, and to pray together as a group for that people group during your prayer time.

1. *God, help us to recognize You in the midst of everyone of our meetings.*
2. *Let every conversation that we have be filled with Your truth and encouragement.*
3. *Give us opportunities to invite others to our group!*

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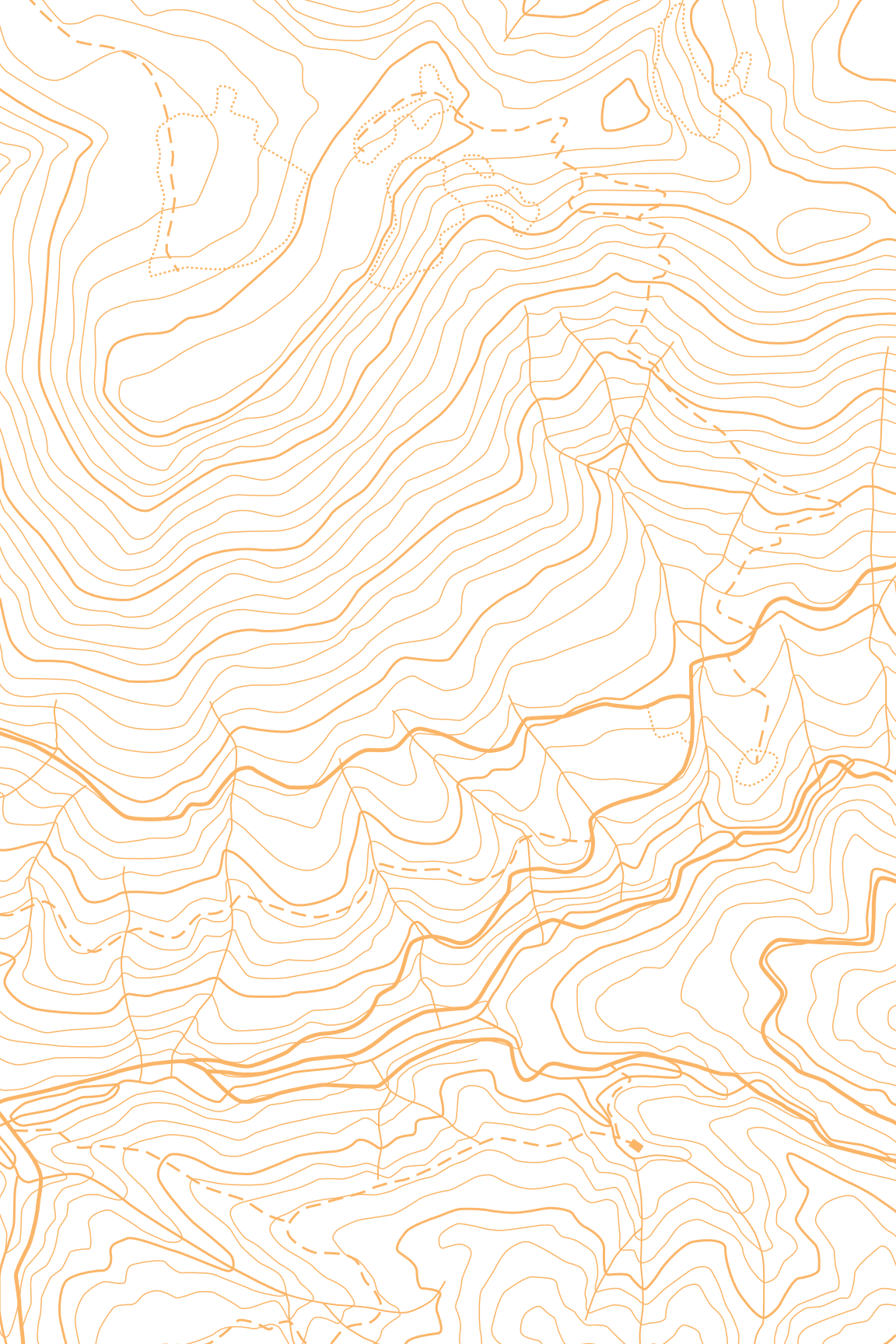
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*Missio Dei*



# OPEN UP

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We begin each session with a question or brief activity designed to help us start on the same page. After everyone has shared, take time to recap what you learned last week. Take turns answering this question:

*If you could witness any event  
in the history of the universe, what would  
it be and why?*

---



# GO DEEP

---

It can be hard to comprehend the full weight of Jesus' birth. From that moment on, God dwelled among us, fully human, yet still fully divine. For a moment, let's imagine Jesus was born just two weeks ago.

Picture our world in the same state as Ancient Israel. We've been clinging tightly to the words of the prophets that told us a King—a Messiah—was coming. We've been waiting thousands of years for a Messiah, a King to come and set things right again. And here He comes! Jesus, our long-awaited Messiah, is here! But instead of a grandiose ruler, the Savior was born to a humble carpenter and his young wife in a stable full of farm animals.

1. *Would you have found it hard to believe that Jesus was the Messiah, given His humble beginning? What parts of the story would have made it difficult for you to believe?*
2. *Why do you think Jesus was born in a manger, rather than coming as a powerful King?*
3. *How do you think Mary and Joseph felt knowing they were going to be the parents of the Messiah?*

In the Ancient Middle East, a person's name meant a great deal. Much more than simply a way to be identified, names carried a heavy weight and told the world who you were and your purpose in life. The name "Jesus," which means "The LORD saves," tells us a lot about the mission of God.

**HISTORICAL INSIGHT** / In the 1960s, a study led by Dr. Peter Stoner asked the question, "What is the likelihood that one person could fulfill all the prophecies made about Jesus?" Dr. Stoner determined that the odds of just one person fulfilling just eight of the prophecies is  $1 \times 10^{17}$ . And Jesus fulfilled all 300 prophecies!

*“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him  
the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins.”  
Matthew 1:21 (NLT)*

The root of everything Jesus would accomplish in His lifetime is explained in this simple sentence: God’s mission is to save those He so dearly loves.

We see another name given to Jesus in this same story: “Immanuel” meaning “God with us.” This name makes it crystal clear who Jesus was. He was not simply a prophet or a good teacher. He was—and is—God Himself, with us.

---

*“Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or  
Else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a  
fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or  
else you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God, but let  
us not come with any patronising nonsense about  
His being a great human teacher. He has not left that  
open to us. He did not intend to...”*

**C.S. LEWIS**

---

The mission of God, to reconcile all things to Himself, was accomplished through Jesus Christ. The birth of Jesus may not have been a grand spectacle, but looks can be deceiving. The birth of Jesus is the single most important event in all of history. God, the author of all history and all time, wrote Himself into the story of His people. While remaining fully divine, Jesus lived and experienced a fully human life, including His birth into the world.

1. What does it mean for us to accept Jesus as fully man and fully God based on the C.S. Lewis quote?
2. How does the birth of Jesus fulfill God’s mission?

# PRAY OVER

---

Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

1. *Thank You God, for coming to rescue us in person. It was Your plan from the beginning of time to set things right, and we are in awe of Your love.*
2. *Help us to grow closer to You and show us a new part of who You are, no matter how long we've been following You.*
3. *Pray for the unreached people group featured at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), each day this week.*

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# BUILD ON

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A VERSE TO MEMORIZE

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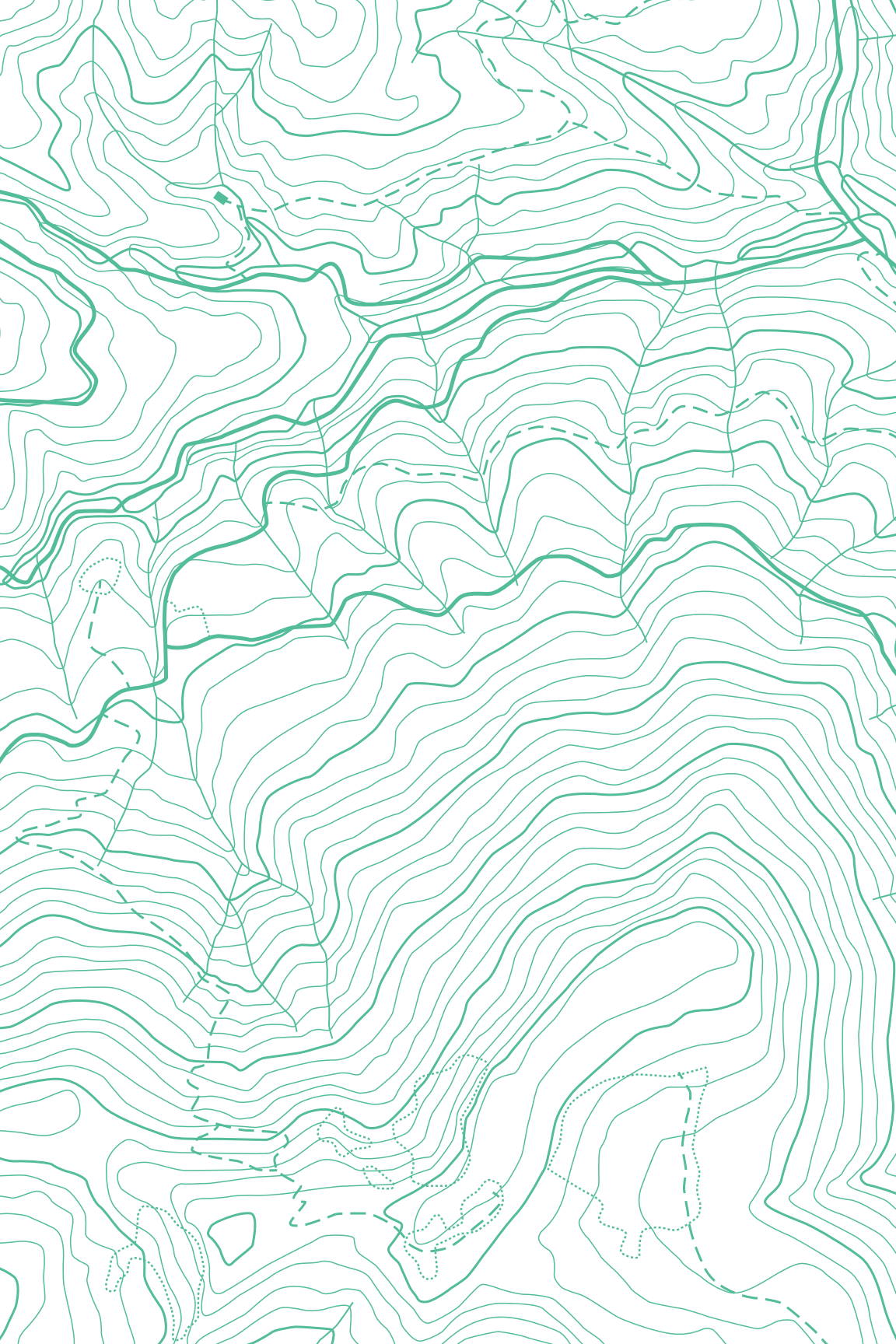
*“God put the world  
square with Himself through the  
Messiah, giving the world a  
fresh start by offering forgiveness  
of sins.”*

---

*Matthew 1:21 (NLT)*

### AN ACTION TO TAKE

Read the account of Jesus' birth again this week (Matthew 1:18-25). Let God speak to you through your reading of the Scripture. What stands out to you? Write down your thoughts and bring them to share next week.





*What is the Kingdom?*



# OPEN UP

---

We begin each session with a question or brief activity designed to help us start on the same page. After everyone has shared, take time to recap what you learned last week. Take turns answering this question:

*What is one experience you have had that  
has filled you with awe?*

---





# GO DEEP

---

Praying together can lead to powerful moments. There's really no "right" or "wrong" way to pray, and it can look very different from person to person. Some people prefer to bow their heads, while others like to pray with their eyes open. Some groups may want to spread around the room, while others will form a circle and hold hands. All of these things are OK! All that matters is that you are having a conversation with God. He will speak to you as you speak to Him.

Take a few minutes now to pray together. Here are a few points you can pray about:

1. *Show us the truth that lies within Your Word. Reveal to us the truth of Your Kingdom through Jesus' parables and let the words sink deep into our hearts, that they might draw us closer to You.*
  2. *Give us hearts that desire to hear You speak. Open our ears be open to what You have to say to us today.*
- 

## THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED

*... "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."*  
*Matthew 13:31-32 (NLT)*

**HISTORICAL INSIGHT** / The mustard seed is among the smallest seeds in the world. (It takes 21,000 mustard seeds to weigh just 1 ounce!) Yet when fully grown, the mustard plant can grow as high as nine feet tall.

Take some time to discuss the following questions:

1. *What did you already know about the parable of the mustard seed? What is something new that you learned?*
  2. *What do you think this parable reveals about the Kingdom of God?*
- 

### **THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE**

*... “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.”*

*Matthew 13:44 (NLT)*

**HISTORICAL INSIGHT** / In First Century Israel, rules of ownership were very different than they are today. When someone was preparing for a journey, they buried their valuables to protect them from thieves. The field in the parable was available for purchase, which means the treasure was most likely unclaimed.

Take some time to discuss the following questions:

1. *Have you ever wanted something so valuable that you considered selling your possessions in order to buy it?*
2. *If the hidden treasure in the field represents the Kingdom of God, why did the man hide it again?*

## THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT VALUE

*... “Again the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!”  
Matthew 31:45-26 (NLT)*

*HISTORICAL INSIGHT / Due to its close proximity in Scripture and similar theme to the parable of the hidden treasure, these two parables are often seen as synonymous with each other. Notice that in the parable of the hidden treasure, Jesus compares the treasure to Kingdom of God, while in the parable of the pearl, He correlates the merchant to the Kingdom of God.*

Take some time to discuss the following questions:

1. *What is the difference between the Kingdom of God being like the hidden treasure and the merchant? Are there any other differences between these two? What is similar?*
2. *If the Kingdom of God is the merchant in this parable, what does the pearl of great value represent?*

The Kingdom of God is filled with lots of “and yet’s.” It is both here, and yet it is coming. It is something we should seek at all costs, and yet it seems to do the same to us. It is a spiritual kingdom, and yet wants to manifest in physical ways through us.

In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray in a passage commonly known as “The Lord’s Prayer.” You have probably heard at least part of this prayer before.

Jesus’ prayer was that the Kingdom of God would come. What do you think that would look like in our lives? Are you willing to see the Kingdom come in your personal life?

*“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be Your Name, **Your**  
**Kingdom come, Your**  
**will be done, on earth as it is**  
**in heaven.***

*Give us today our daily  
bread. And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven  
our debtors. And lead us not into  
temptation, but deliver us  
from the evil one.”*

# PRAY OVER

---

Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

1. *As a group, pray the Lord's Prayer together. Afterwards, feel free to share anything that may be on your heart after studying these parables and any personal or group prayer requests.*
2. *Pray for the unreached people group featured at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), each day this week.*

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# BUILD ON

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A VERSE TO MEMORIZE

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*“May Your Kingdom  
come soon. May Your will be  
done on earth, as it  
is in Heaven.”*

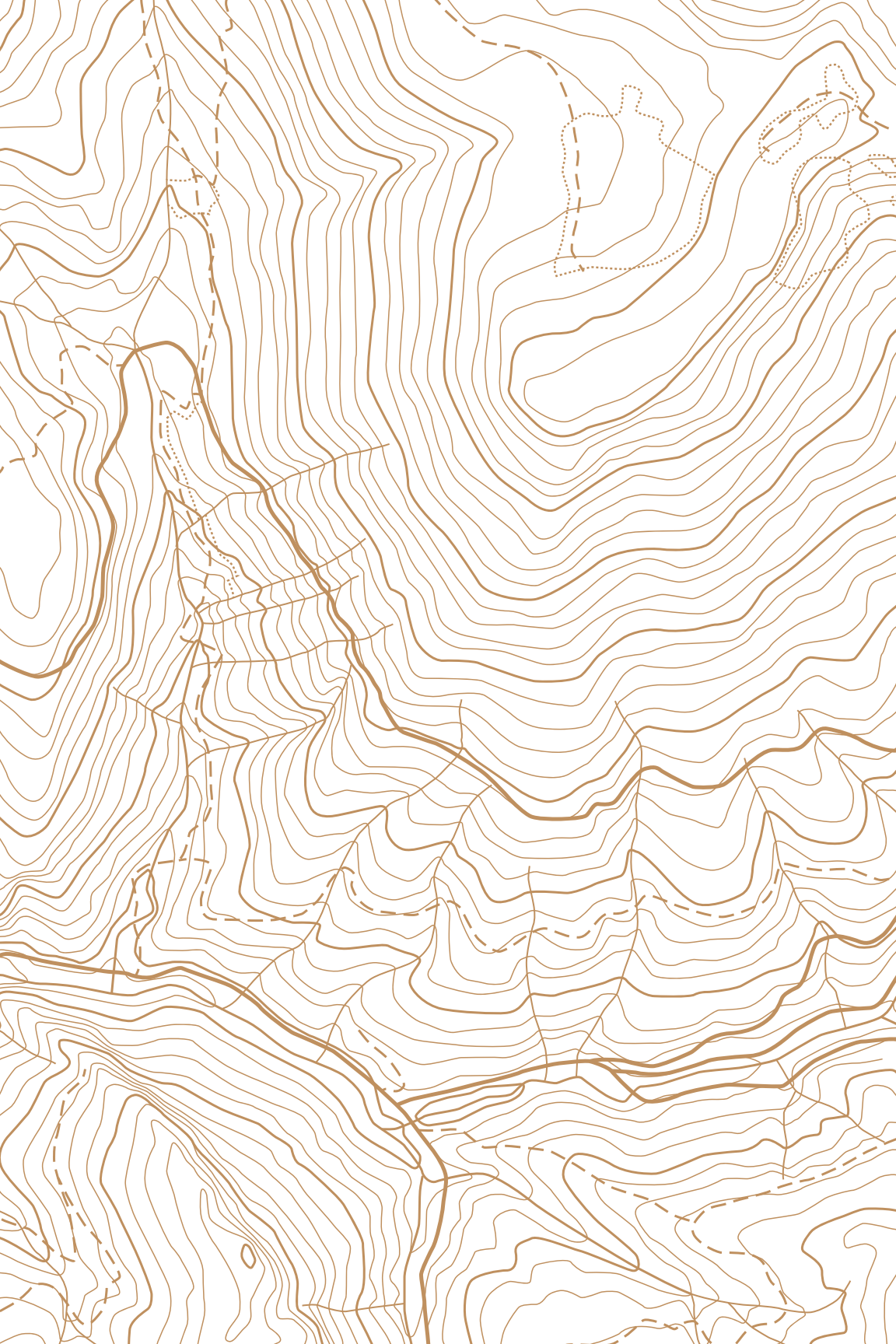
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*Matthew 6:10 (NLT)*



## AN ACTION TO TAKE

As you read your devotions this week, ask God to speak directly to your heart through His Word. Pray that what you read would not only be informational, but deeply inspirational.



# 4

*What is the Church?*



# OPEN UP

---

We begin each session with a question or brief activity designed to help us start on the same page. After everyone has shared, take time to recap what you learned last week. Take turns answering this question:

*Have you ever had someone do something  
for you unconditionally? What was it? How did it  
make you feel?*





# GO DEEP

---

It's time to talk and explore together. Join the conversation by sharing your thoughts and personal insights.

1. *When you think of the “Church”, what comes to mind? Do you think of a place or do you think of people? Is it, in some ways, a little bit of both?*
2. *Reflect on some of the things Jesus did during His ministry on earth. How did the early church continue the ministry of Jesus? How do we as the Body of Christ continue His ministry today?*

In a way, the dialogue between Jesus and Peter is the introduction of the Church into the grand story of God, working in the world. Peter knew Who Jesus truly was, and it was upon this revelation that Jesus would build His Church. The Church had been in the making long before this however. Jesus had been building His Church since He first asked that handful of fishermen to drop their nets and follow Him.

The very beginning of the book of Acts describes the beginning of a new era for the Church:

*“So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, ‘Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?’ He replied, ‘The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.’ After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!’”*  
*Acts 1:6-11 (NLT)*



And there the Apostles stood. Jesus had gone to be in heaven and they were left to tend to the body of people who had been influenced by Jesus. This was the birth of the Church.

*HISTORICAL INSIGHT / In first century culture, infanticide was a common practice. The early Church was one of the first groups that stood against this cultural practice by taking in the abandoned children and raising them. The practice of taking in orphans continued for centuries and left a lasting impression on the world. Many of the children's hospitals and orphanages today originated from this early Church practice!*

*“Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father  
means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let  
the world corrupt you.”  
James 1:27 (NLT)*

The Church hit the ground running. They took care of one another and shared meals together. They took in the sick and societal outcasts. They worshipped together (sometimes secretly). Most importantly, they took Jesus' words to heart and shared the Gospel everywhere!

1. *What do you imagine it was like to be a part of the early church?*
2. *Thinking of the worldwide Church can be difficult sometimes because of the cultural differences we may see. What are some common traits that all people of God share?*
3. *Have you ever been part of a church service outside the United States? What was it like?*
4. *How can our individual mission as a Christ-follower integrate into the global Church?*

Even today, we are still part of the same Church that we read about in the Bible. Every time you share a meal with friends, help a neighbor in need, or use your words and actions to tell others about Jesus, you are actively engaging in the mission of the Church that was established by Jesus Himself.

# PRAY OVER

---

Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

1. *Thank You for the amazing miracles You performed in the early church. They didn't fizzle out, but created a beautiful, diverse, thriving church that we can be a part of today.*
2. *Help us to see that the work we do as the Church is not in vain or isolation. We are part of the Body of Christ and God is moving through our efforts.*
3. *Pray for the unreached people group featured at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), each day this week.*

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# BUILD ON

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A VERSE TO MEMORIZE

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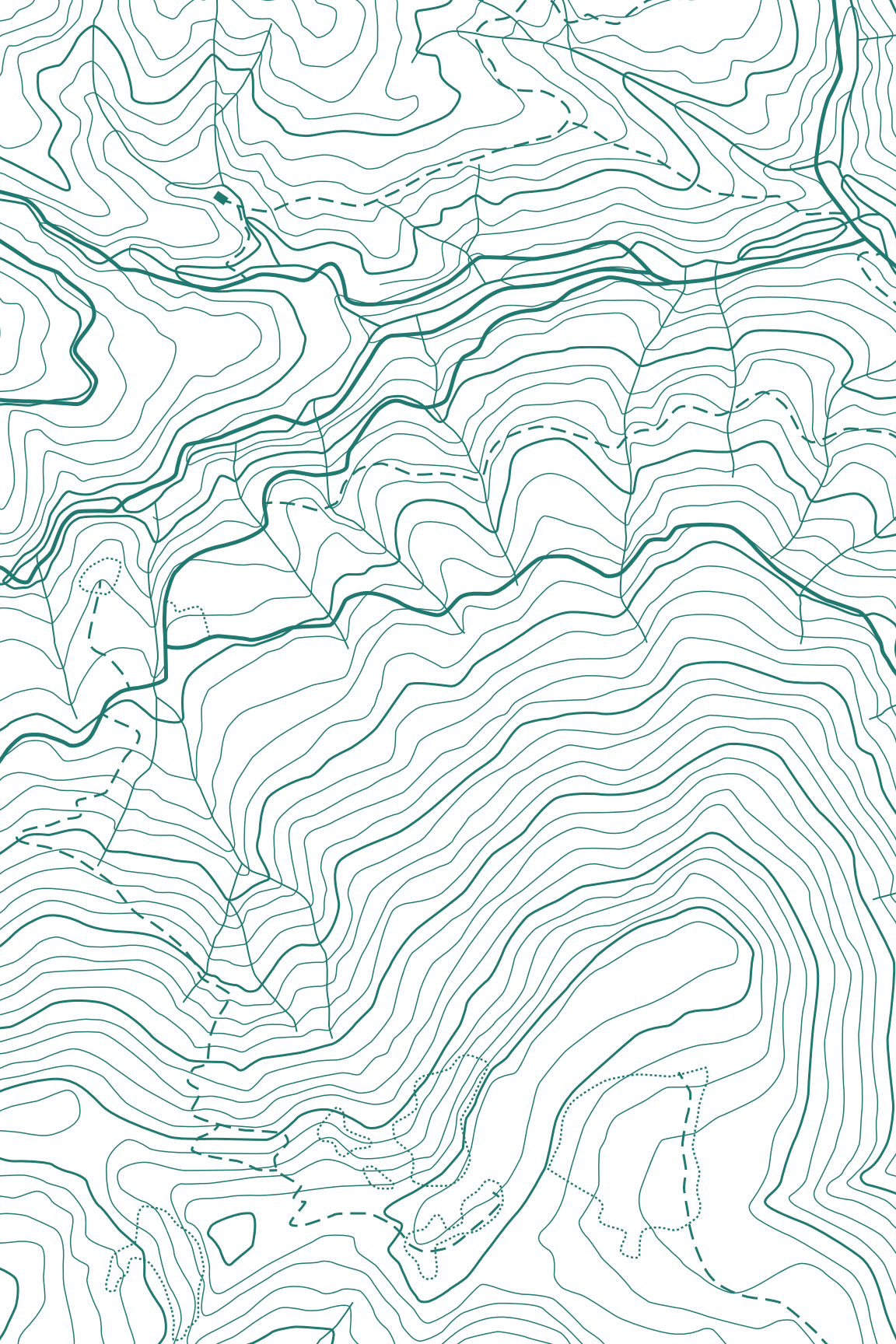
*“But you will receive  
power when the Holy Spirit  
comes upon you.  
And you will be my witnesses,  
telling people about me  
everywhere.”*

---

*Acts 1:8. (NLT)*

## AN ACTION TO TAKE

Find a way to bless someone you know this week in a tangible way. Take someone out for a meal. Buy someone coffee. Run an errand for someone who needs help. Like the early Christians who served so many, take a moment to serve those who are in your life.





*What is my Mission?*

*“...every good endeavour, even the simplest ones, pursued in  
response to God’s calling, can matter forever.”*

---

**TIMOTHY KELLER**



# OPEN UP

---

We begin each session with a question or brief activity designed to help us start on the same page. After everyone has shared, take time to recap what you learned last week. Take turns answering this question:

*Tell the story of your favorite trip.  
Where did you go? Who were you with? Why was it  
so meaningful to you?*

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



# GO DEEP

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It's time to talk and explore together. Join the conversation by sharing your thoughts and personal insights.

Take a moment to look at the verses in Matthew 28, where Jesus commissions His disciples. Put yourself in the disciples' place and read it as if Jesus were speaking to you!

*“Then the eleven disciples left for Galilee, going to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him—but some of them doubted! Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”*

*Matthew 28:16-20 (NLT)*

You've just witnessed the most powerful moment that has occurred in the history of the world. Jesus just rose from the dead. This confirms every promise that Jesus made. Every word about the Kingdom—forgiveness, mercy, abundant life and many other things—Jesus spoke of was true!

1. *What is it about God that you love to share with others?*
2. *How often do you think about those who have never heard about what Jesus did?*
3. *How can you be part of reaching those who have never heard?*
4. *How would what you say and do or change if you knew that the very authority that Jesus carried with Him now goes with you?*

One of the most difficult questions anyone could ask of themselves “What am I going to do with my life?”

A lucky few find their calling at a very young age. For the rest of us, this is a question not easily answered. The details of our individual journey are as unique as each one of us. One thing is true for everyone who has decided to follow Christ: The Great Commission is what each of us are part of in this life. It is the mission God has given His sons and daughters.

---

*“The call of God is not just for an elect few  
but for everyone. Whether I hear God’s call or not depends on  
the condition of my ears, and exactly  
what I hear depends upon my spiritual attitude.”*

**OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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Scripture makes it clear: in the Great Commission there are no spectators. Each one of us plays a role in “going” into the world. None of us should be on the sideline of what God is doing globally, in fact, we should all be “going.” The command to go into all the world is not just for those who are doing full-time missions work. It is for all of us!

1. *Have you ever traveled to visit another culture? If so, how does immersing yourself in another culture affect how you see the world? How has it changed the way you live right here at home?*
2. *What are some ways you could “go,” even if you are not involved in full-time missions work?*
3. *Is “going” important to our maturing in our faith?*

No matter what purpose God may have for you in this life, it is certain that it will aid in this mission He has laid out for every Christian. The Great Commission is the great joining of God and His people in His work.

# PRAY OVER

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Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

1. *God, thank you for including us in on Your plan to set things right again and for commissioning us under the Name of Jesus, the Name which every other power is subject to.*
2. *We give You permission to speak into our plans for life. Help us to live life on mission with You, playing our role in the Great Commission.*
3. *Pray for the unreached people group featured at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net), each day this week.*

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*“Answer my prayers, O Lord, for your  
unfailing love is wonderful. Take care of me, for your  
mercy is so plentiful.”*

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**PSALM 69:16 (NLT)**

# BUILD ON

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A VERSE TO MEMORIZE

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*“Therefore, go and  
make disciples of all the nations,  
baptizing them in the Name  
of the Father and the Son and the  
Holy Spirit.”*

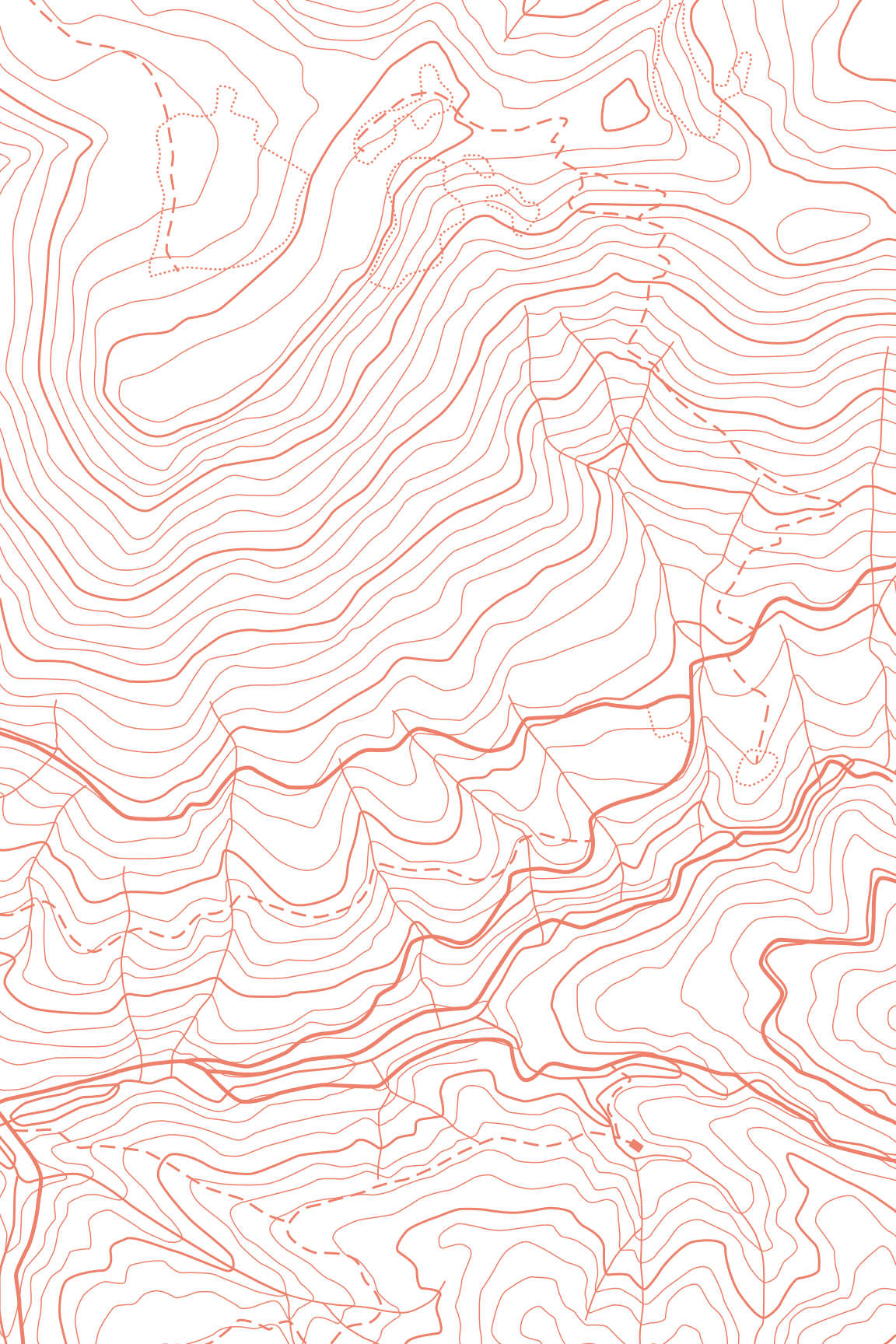
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*Matthew 28:19 (NLT)*



## AN ACTION TO TAKE

Have you ever considered going on a short-term missions trip? If you haven't ever been to a different culture in a missions context, take the leap and go! God speaks and moves in a special way when we are obedient to His call to go! Pray about going this week. Let your heart beat with God's heartbeat for this world!





*What is our Mission?*



# OPEN UP

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We begin each session with a question or brief activity designed to help us start on the same page. After everyone has shared, take time to recap what you learned last week. Take turns answering this question:

*Think about what we talked about at  
the end of last weeks group. Was there any place in the  
world that came to mind?  
Is there any part of going overseas that you are  
uncertain of?*

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# GO DEEP

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Just like the disciples, the Church throughout the centuries has flourished through being with one another and working together. Close, tight-knit community with one another was the best way early Christians took care of one another and took care of the world around them. Just like that, we should not only seek to bring the Kingdom of God into the world on our own, but with each other!

Take a moment to read this passage:

*“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer. A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders. And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need. They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.”*  
*Acts 2:42-47 (NLT)*

Take some time to discuss these questions:

1. What is your impression of the community of believers in the passage above?
2. What do you need most from your community?
3. How can we help one another take an active role in the Great Commission together?



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*“The person who loves their dream of community will destroy community, but the person who loves those around them will create community.”*

**OSWALD CHAMBERS**

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Over the past several weeks, your GO Group has been a part of that same community, sharing with one another, devoting yourselves to God’s teaching and perhaps having meals together. God surely did some amazing things in your hearts. Take some time to share with one another what has changed during GO.

Here are some questions you can discuss:

1. *Share any stories about how you saw God work through GO.*
  2. *How has God changed your perspective on reaching the unreached people groups?*
  3. *How is your life different because of this group?*
  4. *What prayers were answered during this series?*
  5. *What two or three areas do you want to see God change in you during the rest of the year?*
- 

*“The best way to see God do things through your life is to be a part of the local Church.”*

**BRIAN HOUSTON**

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# PRAY OVER

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Take this time to close in prayer together. Here are a couple of prayer points for this week. You can add your own prayer requests or praise reports in the spaces below.

1. *God, thank You so much that with You we have the power to truly grow and change.*
2. *Bless every person in this group in their futures. May their steps be guided by Your words and holy ambition in their hearts.*
3. *We desire to live according to Your mission, so help us to do so!*

4.

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7.

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11.

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12.

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13.

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# BUILD ON

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A VERSE TO MEMORIZE

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*“They worshiped together  
at the Temple each day, met in  
homes for the Lord’s Supper,  
and shared their meals with great  
joy and generosity...”*

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*Acts 2:46 (NLT)*

## AN ACTION TO TAKE

One way the early church remembered the mission of Jesus and pursued the Great Commission together was over a meal. Plan a time within the next week or so to have a communion meal together! It doesn't have to look like traditional communion. Communion with one another can be any meal you share together.

**OK,  
WHAT  
IS  
NEXT?**

We do not want GO to be just a spike in your spiritual life. We want it to be the beginning of a new adventure in becoming a more devoted follower of Jesus Christ. At River Valley Church, there are many options and avenues for you to continue on this journey! We know it can be a little daunting to identify what the best next step for you will be. Going forward, here are some next steps that you can take:

## ATTEND NEXT

If you haven't already taken Next, it is a great first step in making River Valley your home! Next is a four week class that explains, in-depth, why River Valley exists, how we started, where we are going, why we function the way we do and how you can find your place in the vision of the church. As a Lifegroup, Next meets at every campus almost every weekend throughout the year.

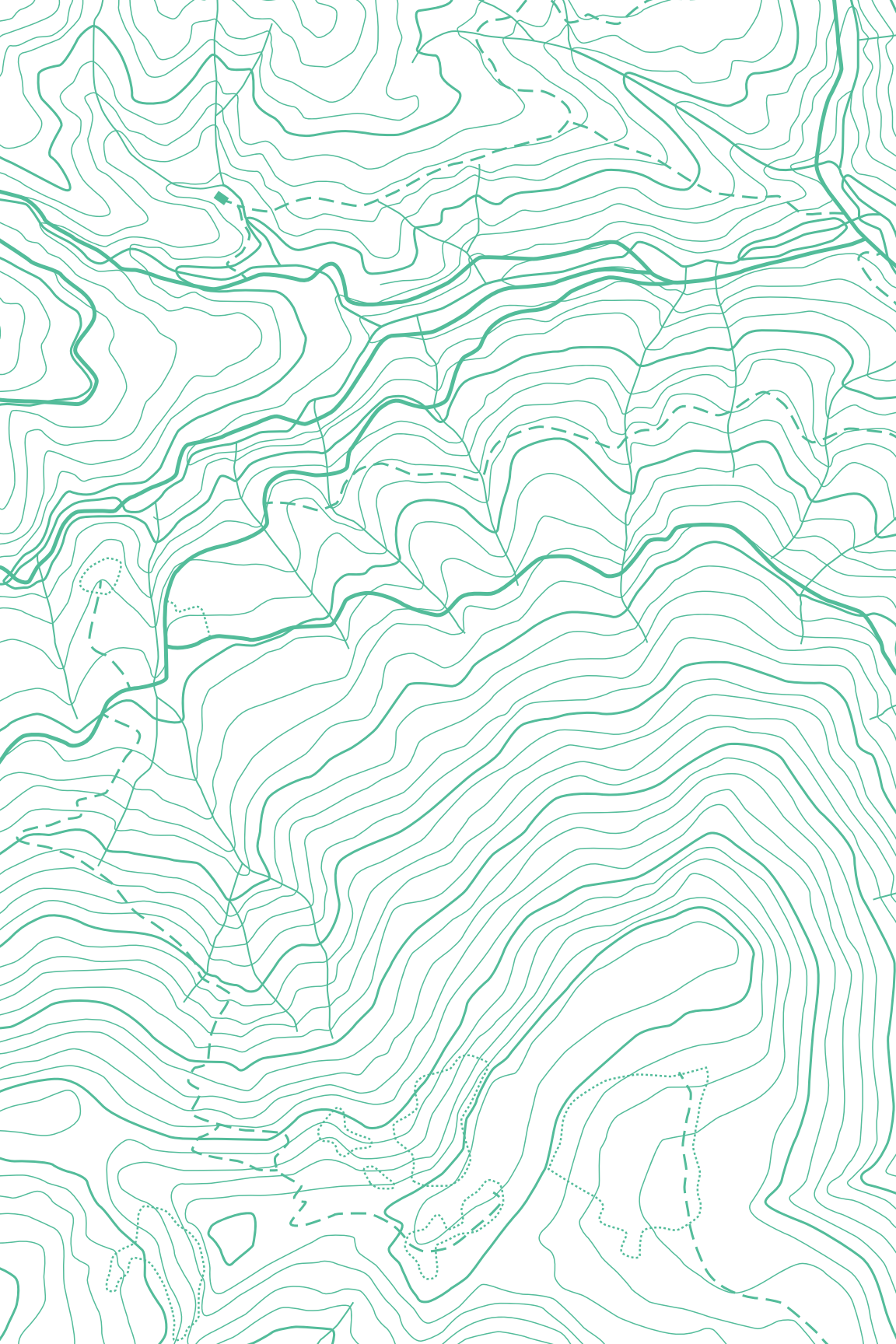
## GO ON A GLOBAL PROJECT

Going on a Global Project is a catalyst for incredible life change. We urge each and every person who calls River Valley Church their home to experience a Global Project. When we take large steps of faith, God meets us and does amazing things in and through our lives. You can find a list of Global Teams, missionaries and organizations that we partner with each month as a church at [www.rivervalleyglobalproject.com](http://www.rivervalleyglobalproject.com)

## KEEP PRAYING

Scripture reminds us that when God begins a work in your life He promises to complete that work. You can continue on the journey of exploring God's commission by praying for a few things:

1. *Pray that God would continue to reveal more and more of who He is to you.*
2. *Continue each day to pray for all of the unreached people of the world featured at [www.joshuaproject.net](http://www.joshuaproject.net).*
3. *Most importantly be sure to be still and listen. Praying is not a one-sided conversation with God. As we pray and speak to Him, He speaks back to us!*





# APPENDIX

*Leader Resources*

# FAQ'S

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## *What do we do on the first night of group?*

Start off with relationship. Your GO group might need to spend some time getting to know one another. Plan extra time for introductions and create a relaxed social atmosphere up front for people to get to know one another. Remember, we want you to be connected with one another, so a little fun and socializing is a great way to start.

## *Where do I find new members for my group?*

We always say that the best way to find members for your group is to look for people already in your proximity. Brainstorm a list of people you could invite from your work, your neighborhood, your family, your child's school, your gym and so on.

## *How long will this group meet?*

It's totally up to the group once you come to the end of this six-week study. During the GO series your group will meet weekly and after those six weeks it's our hope that your group will continue to meet either weekly or every other week, we encourage both.

At the end of this study, each group member may decide if he or she wants to continue on for another study. Some groups launch relationships for years to come and other are stepping-stones into another group experience. Either way, enjoy the journey.

## *What if this group is not working for us?*

Don't worry, you are not alone! This can often be the result of geographical distance, life-stage difference, personality conflict, level of spiritual maturity or a number of other things. Take a deep breath. You don't always buy the first car you look at or marry the first person you date, and the same goes with your group. Don't bail out before the six weeks are up—God might be looking to teach you something.

Be careful not to quickly judge people or run from conflict—remember we're all a work in progress. Seek God in the process and extend grace to one another.

### *Who is the leader?*

There is a designated or official leader for each group. That person gets the final call. That said, we have found that in the healthiest groups leaders share responsibility. This ensures that all members grow, giving their unique contribution and developing their gifts. Ultimately, we recognize God's leadership in the group and give him thanks for every breakthrough the group sees.

### *How do we handle childcare needs in our group?*

With careful deliberation, knowing this can be a sensitive issue. We suggest empowering the group to openly brainstorm solutions - this is a good discussion to start when you meet. You may try one option that works for a while and then adjust it over time. Our favorite approach is for adults to meet in the living room or dining room, sharing the cost of a babysitter (or two) who can be with the kids in a different part of the house. In this way parents don't have to be away from their children all evening when their children are too young to be left at home.

A second option is to use one home for the kids and a second home (close by or a phone call away) for the adults. A third idea is to rotate the responsibility of providing a lesson or care for the children between group members in another home or room of the house.

Finally, a common idea is to decide that you need to have a night to invest in your spiritual lives individually or as a couple, and to make your own arrangements for childcare. No matter what decision the group makes, the best approach is to dialogue openly about the plan.

# LEADING A GROUP 101

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## THINK FACILITATOR

Leading a group is all about being a good facilitator. You don't have to have all the answers but you do have to give every person an opportunity to contribute and feel valued. That will happen most effectively when you ask great questions and tie together the responses of those around you. Grow as a facilitator and watch your group thrive.

## PREPARE AND PRAY

Master the art of working like it depends on you and praying like it depends on God. Put your best foot forward every week. Come prepared to lead with excellence. Be prepared spiritually. But don't think it is all about you. Stay grounded in prayer for each person in your group.

## YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Leading a group may seem like an intimidating thing, especially if this is your first time. We all have friends, leaders, and pastors to help you prepare and lead your group well. Keep in mind that you also have the Holy Spirit guiding you every step of the way. Lean on Him as you prepare and facilitate your group experience.

## LEAD THE WAY IN HOSPITALITY

Lead by example here. Take every opportunity to shower your group participants with hospitality. Make sure you welcome and connect with each participant during the meetings. In addition, have some snacks or drinks available when your group arrives. (Feel free to ask others in the group to help you make this happen from week to week). Hospitality doesn't have to cost a lot of money. Have an attitude of joy and love because you are a host as well as a leader. We're all a work in progress. Seek God in the process and extend grace to one another.

## GO SMALLER

Helping others find community through meeting together is a great win for your GO group. Even in the smaller setting of a group, seize the opportunity to find even smaller groups within your group. These smaller groups can more effectively pray for one another and hold each other accountable.

## EMBRACE THE SILENCE

Silence is going to happen. Questions, especially at first, will usually be met by silence rather than an outpouring of responses, so be prepared for that. It's okay to have silence in a group setting. Don't try to break the silence by giving your response. Silence can be a healthy part of the group dynamic.

## RAISE UP SOMEONE ELSE

Every group has an opportunity to raise up and equip a leader for the Kingdom of God. Each one of us was created with an ability to serve and influence others, which are two indispensable qualities of great leaders. Have other group members lead the discussion of a question. Engage potential leaders in conversation to gauge their interest in leading another group. You always have an emerging leader in your midst.

## BE YOU

God created you uniquely because you are destined to leave a unique mark on this world. God has further led you to this moment, where you have a chance to influence those in your Lifegroup so don't try to be someone you're not. God placed you here for a reason. People want to know the true you.

## LOVE THOSE AROUND YOU

Don't forget that you have been entrusted with God's most precious creation—people. Now don't feel burdened by that because there is no such thing as a perfect leader. God did not call you to lead those in your Lifegroup because you're perfect. He called you to love those around you. Take every chance to love your group members. Pray for them whenever you can.

## CELEBRATE THE WINS

What's celebrated is repeated, so celebrate the wins in your group. Celebrate when prayer is answered, when leaders step up, when group members come prepared, when everyone participates. Use celebration as a strategic opportunity to model great group behavior to those around you.

**HOW  
TO  
BREAK  
THE  
ICE...**

## HERE ARE SOME ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS

1.

*Where is your favorite vacation destination?*

2.

*What is one item you should really throw away, but you probably never will?*

3.

*What is one food you would never want to taste again?*

4.

*If you could be any animated character, who would you choose to be?*

5.

*Name a gift you will never forget.*

6.

*What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?*

7.

*What's your favorite thing to do in the winter?*

8.

*What is an important quality you look for in a friend?*

9.

*When you were younger what did you want to be when you grew up?*

10.

*What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?*







*“It is my hope and prayer  
that each of us will be compelled to  
participate in the  
Greatest Commission ever given to  
humans: to take the  
Gospel to the uttermost parts of  
the earth.”*

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**PASTOR ROB KETTERLING**



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