

OPEN THE DOOR

**DISCUSSION GUIDE
SEPTEMBER 13, 2020**



SAVING GRACE
— LUTHERAN CHURCH —

**Open the Door:
Open the Door to Real Relationships**

Pastor Tim Lawson

Text: Romans 12:9-16

We understand that it is difficult to connect with a group of people right now. If you are able to connect with a group from Saving Grace online feel free to use this material as a discussion guide. You may also use this material with your family or adapt it as a self-assessment tool.

Enjoy!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

WITH YOUR GROUP/FAMILY...

Answer each of the following questions prompted by September 13th sermon.

1. “Studies show how profoundly drawn toward similar types of people we are. People who look, act and think like you. People who make you comfortable.” Why do you think that this is true for many/most people?
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2. What should it mean for the Christian’s calling in life to know that “He [Jesus] saw all of the differences and division and relational chaos...the sin...and came down from heaven. He didn’t divide. He desired to unite all by dying our death on a cross.”?
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3. The first of Four Foundational Elements of Real Relationships pastor shared is **Authenticity**. Read Romans 12:9. Do you believe that people know when someone is being inauthentic to them? Explain.
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4. “Greek culture knew a thing or two about masks - especially in the theater. In Greek times actors would portray many different characters. Each time a character changed the mask would change. These actors were literally known as **“hypocrites.”** How does knowing the origin of the word “hypocrite” help you understand what wearing a mask conveys to others in terms of trying to have an authentic relationship with them?
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5. Why can it be uncomfortable at times to remove the masks we wear with Jesus and/or with other people? What steps can we take to begin to remove them?
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6. Sometimes pre-Christians or the de-Churched state that they don’t want to be a part of a church community because “they are all hypocrites”. What do you believe they are saying by that statement? What can we do as Christians to combat that stereotype to connect more people to Jesus?
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7. The second foundational element for real relationships is Courtesy. Read Romans 12:10-11. Comment on: “Courtesy. It’s not a word we use in our culture much. Let’s make courtesy cool. I love the word “outdo” in this passage. We should be on the lookout and excited to show courtesy.”
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8. The third element for real relationships is **Hospitality**. Read Romans 12:12-13. “Showing hospitality to strangers doesn’t mean endangering your family. It means being open to opening your home for eating and conversing with the people God leads to your front door.” What could be the reason God encourages to do this for people that we don’t know very well or at all?
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9. Read Romans 12:14. Why would St. Paul (God) challenge us to do such a thing for our **enemies**?

10. Our last foundational element to authentic relationships is **Unity**. Read Romans 12:16. Comment on pastor's critique: "Live in harmony with one another? All we have to do is mind our own business. Stay in our own respective lanes. You do you, and I'll do me. Simple as that. Or, so the world says." DO you believe this is true?

11. When the struggles of life come who is there? Who is praying and supporting you? Use the blanks below to write down names of at least 3 people that first come to mind that are there for you and will pray and support you in good and bad times.

12. Comment on this quote by C.S. Lewis, "*When you find yourself wanting to turn your children, or pupils, or even your neighbors, into people exactly like yourself, remember that God probably never meant them to be that.*"

13. As a small group read aloud and in unison: "Our church will not participate in the anger. We will speak the truth in love from God's Word. We will love and not hate. We will bless and not curse. We will show hospitality to all people. We will do nothing to defame the great name of Jesus! We will remain united under the cross of Jesus."

WITH YOUR KIDS...

14. Who are your top 2 very best friends? Why would you choose them?

15. Do you feel that you can be yourself/be honest with these friends with what is going on in your life?

16. List two people that you do not know very well that you could work harder at trying to get to know them better and maybe become a friend to them?

17. How might you begin the process of reaching out to them to start a conversation? What kinds of questions could you ask them?

ON YOUR OWN...

18. Who is someone in your life that you would describe as hospitable? What characteristics do you notice as they serve others? In what ways would you like to grow in this area?

19. What prevents you from welcoming others into your home? What fears or misunderstandings about hospitality keep you from reaching out to others?

20. When was the last time you invited someone into your home? Is there someone that you've been meaning to have over, but have neglected to do so? What can you do today to reach out to them?