

Overwhelmed Series - Group Discussion Questions

Week 1 - Anxiety

Thank you for leading the Overwhelmed series conversation in your group. Below are a few questions to facilitate group discussion. Please ask the Holy Spirit for guidance as you enter this space and trust His direction as you discern which questions will create the most meaningful conversation in your unique group.

Your primary objective is to create a safe place for authentic sharing through free-flowing discussion where everyone has the opportunity to be heard, known and loved. This will be greatly facilitated by your level of vulnerability. If the leader takes off their “I have it all together” mask, the rest of those in the room have permission to do so as well, and then real and life-giving connections are birthed.

Here are a few ideas that may facilitate good discussion:

Tell everyone that silent space in the discussion is okay. Some people process thoughts internally and some process through speaking their thoughts. Both are great, we just need to make sure the external processors allow a bit of space for those who prefer a little longer before they speak. And encourage the internal processors to share their thoughts.

Some questions you can ask to each person in the circle (with an option to pass), but the more sensitive questions may be best asked to the group with only one or two providing responses.

1. Introductions:

- Very briefly - in less than a minute - tell us your name and little about yourself, I will start...
- What do you hope to get out of this group?

2. Tell us about an activity that you find relaxing.

3. What makes you feel tense?

4. Would you be more likely to feel anxious about finances, relationships, work or fill in the blank?

5. Read aloud:

Anxiety is not so much the onslaught of a storm as the continual threat that one is coming. It's a big heap of peace-robbing "what ifs"... What if I don't get the job, what if I can't keep the job, what if I get cancer, what if I'm not enough, what if he cheats on me, what if they think I'm stupid, what if she leaves me, what if this plane falls out of the air, what if my kid is one of the extraordinarily small percentage of kids who have a reaction to this vaccination, what if...

-What are some of the "what if's" that have stolen peace from your life?

6. Think about a time when what you thought about a particular challenge you were facing was bigger than the challenge itself. What happened?

7. We live in a technology-driven society, with smartphones, laptops and tablets at our fingertips. How has technology influenced your thought patterns? How have you seen technology fill your mind with anxious thoughts?

8. What are some ways that people deal with anxiety in their lives - both healthy and unhealthy?

9. Read Philippians 4:4-9

"4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you." (NIV)

- What practical help does this passage offer when anxiety grips us?

- What does this passage say about what we choose to set our minds on? How does that impact our anxiety levels?

- Practically, how do you put this passage into action when you are gripped with anxiety?

8. Share about a time where you experienced peace that "transcends all understanding."

9. Philippians 4 tells us to pray about those things that make us anxious. To hand over to God those things that weigh on our hearts. We can do that in the privacy of our own prayer time and we can do that by sharing with others who will pray with us and for us. Anxiety can be our cue to pray. Peace happens when people pray.

-What specific anxieties are weighing on you today that we can pray together about? (Leader, start by sharing a specific anxiety that weighs on you, if possible)

End the time in prayer and encourage your group to memorize Philippians 4:4-9 so that they will have this guidance at hand when they feel anxious.