
Renew: Returning to the Heartbeat of Hope

“Shared Experience: Grace for Exiles”

1 Peter 4:7-11

“We are sinners with the capacity to do great damage to ourselves and our relationships. We need God's grace to save us from ourselves. But we are also God's children, which means that we have great hope and potential—not hope that rests on our gifts, experience, or track record, but hope that rests in Christ. Because he is in us and we are in him, it is right to say that our potential *is* Christ.”

– Timothy Lane and Paul Tripp, *Relationships: A Mess Worth Making*

“A life of hospitality begins in worship, with a recognition of God's grace and generosity. Hospitality is not first a duty and responsibility; it is first a response of love and gratitude for God's love and welcome to us.”

– Christine Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*

“It is not merely that the rich man is obliged to meet the needs of those who are less well off than he is but also that each one of us must use the gifts which we have received either by nature or by the Holy Spirit, so that no one may say that we are keeping these things to ourselves and refusing to share them with our neighbors.”

– Andreas, *Catena*

“What more sublime can be said of friendship, what more true, what more profitable, than it ought to, and has proved to, begin in Christ, continue in Christ, and be perfected in Christ.”

– Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship*

Questions to Guide Reflection and Response

- Read the passage and the quotes above. What kinds of questions or thoughts were stirred up?
 - Did the Scripture or sermon make you feel guilt or shame? If so, in what way(s)?
 - Did the Scripture or sermon encourage you? If so, in what way(s)?
- Why does our relationship to God matter to our relationships?
- Do relationships feel like they are “a mess worth making”?
 - What are some ways you can pursue new friendships or cultivate existing ones?
- Why is it so hard to confess our sins to others?
 - Why is this vulnerability so critical to experiencing true friendship?
 - Can you think of a time in your life where this happened to you?
- What does it look like to extend welcome to “the other” or “outsiders”?
 - Where have you seen this play out, either positively or negatively?
 - Can you think of one or two ways you can “make room” for others in your life?
- What can we learn from Jesus, who is our fiercely loyal, (seemingly) recklessly welcoming, and perfectly servant-hearted friend?
- If you have time as a group, read Luke 14:7-24 and talk about how these parables reflect God's heart for us, as well as his values as we pursue others.