

# Small Group Ministry Session 15: Questions of Faith

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## OPENING WORDS

"Faith does not require a belief system, and is not necessarily connected to a deity or God, though it doesn't deny one. This faith we have is not a commodity we either have or don't have-it is an inner quality that unfolds as we learn to trust our own deepest experience. The Buddha said, 'Faith is the beginning of all good things.' No matter what we encounter in life, it is faith that enables us to try again, to trust again, to love again. Even in times of immense suffering, it is faith that enables us to relate to the present moment in such a way that we can go on, we can move forward, instead of becoming lost in resignation and despair. Faith links our present-day experience, whether wonderful or terrible, to the underlying pulse of life itself."

- Sharon Salzberg's Faith: Trusting Your Own Deepest Experience, xiv

## CHECK IN

- Current state of physical or spiritual health
- Joys or concerns about loved ones
- Concerns/excitement about what is happening in our lives

## REVIEW

## BREAK

## DISCUSSION

James Fowler begins his book Stage of Faith with these words: What are you spending and being spent for? What commands and receives your best time, your best energy? What causes, dreams, goals, or institutions are you pouring out your life for? As you live, what power or powers do you fear or dread? On what power or powers do you rely or trust? To what or whom are you committed in life? In death? With whom or what group do you share your most sacred and private hopes for your life and for the lives of those you love? What are those most sacred hopes, those most compelling goals and purposes in your life?

## CHECK OUT

What did you like about this meeting? What do you wish had been different?

## CLOSING WORDS

"We have the absolute right to reach out, without holding back, toward what we care about more than anything. Whether we describe the recipient as God, or a profound sense of indestructible love, or the dream of a kinder world, it is in the act of offering our hearts in faith that something in us transforms, and what may have been merely a remote abstraction flames into life. [When we] proclaim . . . that we no longer stand on the sidelines[,"

we] leap . . . directly into the center of our lives, our truth, our full potential. No one can take that leap for us, and no one has to. This is our journey of faith.