

# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY Session 19: Approval

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## OPENING WORDS

"We are here to follow the promptings of our deepest heart.  
We are here with expectations, alive, spoken and unspoken.  
We are here because we are human.  
Creatures of Solitude and communion.  
Wanting wholeness, knowing brokenness.  
We meet here once again to remind ourselves of what we already know.  
We open ourselves to word, story, song.  
To whatever breaks in upon us or summons us to speak or act.  
Our time together affects our time apart.  
We want to participate, to be known, to be loved.  
We know limits, yet so much is possible. . ."

- Mark Belletini

## CHECK-IN/SHARING

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

## REVIEW COVENANT

## REVIEW PROGRESS OF THE CIRCLE

Topic/Activity: We all seek approval in one form or another. We play music and hope for applause. We recommend a new approach at work or school and hope others will support us. We reach out to a new friend, wanting them to be interested in getting to know us, too. Sometimes we can confuse approval with being liked or even with love. We may set aside who we uniquely are in order to gain approval. To an extreme, we can become "pleasers," who seek approval rather than reaping our own individuality. In our society, we call people eccentric who have the courage to live to their own drumbeat.

1. What is the experience of approval in your life?
2. Describe a time in your life when you had to choose between being true to yourself or getting approval. What was your choice? What was this experience like for you?
3. Are there times when seeking approval might be a positive choice?
4. How does one develop the courage to be true to themselves in the face of disapproval?
5. Is there any area in your life where you might be considered eccentric?

## CHECK OUT

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

## **CLOSING WORDS**

"Go into the highways and by-ways. Give people something of our new vision. You may possess a small light, but uncover it, let it shine, use it in order to bring more light and understanding to the hearts and minds of men and women. Give them not hell, but hope and courage; preach the kindness and everlasting love of God."

- John Murray