

Small Group Ministry Session Eight: Living and Dying

OPENING WORDS

"For the sun and the dawn which we did not create; for the moon and the evening which we did not make; for food we plant but cannot grow; for friends and loved ones we have not earned and cannot buy; for this gathered company which welcomes us as we are and from wherever we have come; for our free churches that keep us human and encourage us in our quest for beauty, truth, and love; for all that comes to us as gifts from sources beyond ourselves: for gifts of life and friendship, and for this day, may we give thanks.

- adapted from Richard M. Fewkes

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 COVENANT

BREAK

DISCUSSION

John Buehrens, the past UUA president, writes: "Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die." The knowledge of our own death is an enormous shaper of human behavior. How does this knowledge shape your life? What sorrow does it bring? What will you miss most? And how can the foreknowledge of our own death enrich our days?

CHECK OUT

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

CLOSING WORDS

Did someone say that there would be an end,
An end, Oh, an end, to love and mourning?
What has been once so interwoven cannot be raveled, nor the gift ungiven.
Now the dead move through all of us still glowing,
Mother and child, lover and lover mated are wound and bound together and enflowing.
What has been plaited cannot be unplaited-only the strands grow richer with each loss
And memory makes kings and queens of us.
Dark into light, light into darkness, spin. When all the birds have flown to some real haven.
We who find shelter in the warmth within, Listen and feel new-cherished, new-forgiven,
As the lost human voices speak through us and blend our complex love, our mourning without end.

- May Sarton, #718