

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

February 20, 2023

The Power of Presence

The Ties That Bind

Job 2:11-13

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- * What did you hear?
- * What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- * What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

11 Now when Job's three friends heard of all these troubles that had come upon him, each of them set out from his home—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. They met together to go and console and comfort him. ¹² When they saw him from a distance, they did not recognize him, and they raised their voices and wept aloud; they tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads. ¹³ They sat with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.

REFLECTION

During these two weeks of sitting in this passage in Job, we're exploring how we form the kind of friendships modeled by Job and his friends. As per the 85-year old Harvard Study for Adult Development, the number one critical need for happiness is deep connections with others. **How have you thought more deeply about your connections with others over this past week?**

Job, afflicted both emotionally and physically, is attended by his friends for seven days in the midst of his suffering. Last week we asked ourselves if we'd be willing to be Job, allowing for the vulnerability it takes to cultivate friendships. This week, we move to the position of his three friends. **When they enter into Job's suffering, do they come in and try to fix it? Why do you think our tendency to try to fix others' problems is so strong?**

The sadness and pain of others can be so overwhelming, that we feel like it's not enough just to "be" with people in their suffering. The "ministry of presence" that his friends demonstrate is powerful. It's tough to realize that we do not have the ability to make things worse for others. **How have you been blessed by a friend's ministry of presence?**

A ministry of presence can take a variety of forms - letters, phone calls, texts, a simple smile or wave. Consider all the places where you live, work, and play. **Ask God how He might be leading you to show up in someone's life this week. How might your willingness to hear his voice and be flexible with your schedule make a huge difference for someone?**