


# “Meeting God in the Present”

Remember: The goal of small group is 100% participation . . . to hear from everyone. Choose the questions you think your group will respond to, but center them around the Bible by using the questions marked with “  ”





## Open It:

- What’s one ordinary, everyday routine in your life where you sometimes forget God is present?
- If you had to choose, would you rather wait patiently for something amazing in the future or experience small, consistent blessings each day? Why??

## Read It:

 Jeremiah 29:1-14

## Explore It:

- Why do we often expect to encounter God more in “big” moments than in everyday life? *God is still present in ordinary moments, but we’re too busy to look for Him or notice. Without high emotion, we miss His presence.*
-  How does Jeremiah 29 challenge the idea that God only works in extraordinary events. *It seems clear that God uses 70 years of regular days (vs 5-7) building houses, settling down, planting gardens, eating produce, building families, multiplying families, improving the city, and praying for their enemies to develop a stronger relationship with His people before He brings restoration.*
-  In Jeremiah 29:1–3a, why is it significant that God’s message is sent to exiles, not people in comfort? *God was building a relationship with them and so their dependence on Him was important.*
  - How can comfort distract us from God’s presence?

- Why do you think God often calls His people to long seasons of waiting before restoration? **More waiting = more dependence. It also produces perseverance and grows faith.**



In Jeremiah 29:5–7, God commands His people to plant gardens, build homes, and raise families. What does this reveal about how God values the ordinary? **God uses ordinary things to shape us. The disciples were “ordinary” too. God uses “ordinary things to change the world. Little things like planting gardens and waiting teach us to trust in Him even when we can’t see any fruit.**

- What does it mean to “be God’s people every day”? **Acts 4:13 describes Peter and John as “unschooled, ordinary men.”**



Jeremiah 29:7 instructs the exiles to pray for Babylon’s prosperity. How radical would that have sounded to them? How radical is it for us today? **Babylon destroyed their home in Jerusalem and temple. They also took them captive. This is “praying for your enemies.” (Matthew 5:44) God seems to always be interested in us being “for our neighbors, the nations, and the next generation.” He should be glorified and honored everywhere and that might mean we are to act in obedience rather than out of our emotions. His ways are higher than ours. (Isaiah 55:8-9)**



How does the call to seek the well-being of the city (v. 7) change how we think about our neighborhoods or communities? **Our natural instinct is for endurance, escape, and revenge, but since we are His representatives and bear His image, He calls us to something more. We are called to make Him known and to share the “Good News” (Jesus) with the world. Remember: Paul prayed in the prison and the jailer came to know Jesus. (Acts 16) Paul saw beyond his circumstances.**



Jeremiah 29:10 reminds the exiles that restoration will take seventy years. How do we respond when God’s timeline is longer than ours? **Not well. We get impatient and take things into our own hands. Sometimes we try to make something happen or just get angry with God. This could be an opportunity to practice trusting God and to learn to let go of the reins. Maybe it’s a time we should lean into prayer and connection.**



How do Jeremiah 29:10–14 shape the way we think about God’s promises today. . . both what is already fulfilled and what we still await? **We live in the “in between.” We are between what God has promised/accomplished but haven’t yet experienced it**

all. God's promises are sure though. They are settled. They just may not come on our timeline. This is what faith is all about – learning to trust Him for that which is still to come. Let's also remember that His promises extend beyond our own circumstances. Our current struggle might be a part of someone else's story.



How do Jeremiah 29:11–14 give hope to God's exiled people? What stands out to you in those verses? *You might want to read this passage aloud again. Spend some time here and allow your group to reflect and express which part of God's promise resonates with them the most and why.*



Verse 11 says God knows His plans. How does that assurance differ from us knowing the details of those plans? *We may want to know, but that knowledge is better in Him than in us. We would probably take it into our hands and try to move forward without God.*



In Jeremiah 29:12–13, God promises to listen and be found when His people seek Him. How do we see this fulfilled in Christ? *Jesus listens and is constantly present with us.*

- What does the phrase “Your present may not change, but your hope can” mean to you? *Difficult circumstances can be painful and don't make sense to us, but it usually stems from not placing our hope in the right things. Ex: We place hope in our abilities, in our position, our relationships, our financial resources, etc, but circumstances can overwhelm all of these things. However, if our hope is in Jesus, He can never be overwhelmed. “Death could not hold Him!”*
- How do we balance future promises of God with the reality of present suffering? *We must give more weight to His promises. It's clear that our suffering is only temporary when we trust His promises. This is baptism: As we are buried with Christ (temporary suffering) we also get to experience new life in Him. (Eternal promises)*
- Why might God use suffering and hardship as part of His plans for His people?
  - *to form and shape us into His image*
  - *to discipline us*
  - *to stretch our faith*
  - *to remind us that our home is not here, but with Him*
  - *to soften our hearts for others who are suffering*
  - *to ignite a passion in us to continue His mission*

## **Do It:**

- How will you reframe one ordinary daily practice as worship this week?
- What is a small act of faithfulness you will commit to in your family or relationships?
- What would it look like for you to “seek the well-being of your city” in a practical way this month?
- How can you remind yourself that the assurance of Jeremiah 29:11 is not in knowing the plan but in trusting the Planner?
- Where in your life right now do you need to hold on to future hope while being faithful in the present?