

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart, your loving ways—
Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.
And if you ever doubt yourself, remember us, who love you well—
We know all the gifts you bring into the world each day.
So thank you for your loving hands, your loving heart, your loving ways,
Thank you for the gifts you bring into the world each day.

—by Judy Fjell and Lisa Bregger

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to honor the group by letting the leader know if I will be absent, and to come to the group one last time and say good-bye if I need to quit
- to avoid cross talk, giving feedback or trying to fix anyone
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and not tell other people's stories
- to listen to what others share with an open heart, and to share deeply in my turn

Covenant Groups

Beauty



Love is much like a wild rose, beautiful and calm,
but willing to draw blood in its defense.

—Mark Overby

Beauty

Chalice Lighting

As many do around the world, let us begin by lighting our chalice. Today let us be reminded of beauty in all its forms as we see the light shining for us.

—Reverend Phil Silk

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows

Silence

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

Tell them dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,
Then beauty is its own excuse for being.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Close your eyes and see the beauty.

—Author unknown

It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness.

—Leo Tolstoy

Beauty always promises, but never gives anything.

—Simone Weil

What humbugs we are, who pretend to live for Beauty, and never see the Dawn!

—Logan Pearsall Smith

The most beautiful view is the one I share with you.

—Author unknown

Beauty comes in all sizes, not just size 5.

—Roseanne

I don't like standard beauty—there is no beauty without strangeness.

—Karl Lagerfeld

There is a road from the eye to the heart that does not go through the intellect.

—Gilbert Keith Chesterton

Beauty and folly are generally companions.

—Baltasar Gracian

Beauty comes as much from the mind as from the eye.

—Grey Livingston

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.

—Confucius

Plainness has its peculiar temptations quite as much as beauty.

—George Eliot

As we grow old, the beauty steals inward.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful; for beauty is God's handwriting—a wayside sacrament. Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every fair flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening

Round 1: What role does beauty play in your life? How has this changed over the course of your life?

Round 2: What quote rang true for you in either the bulletin or the homework? Explain how it is applicable to you.

Round 3: Expand on something you or another member shared.

Closing Words

It is foolish to wish for beauty. Sensible people never either desire it for themselves or care about it in others. If the mind be but well cultivated, and the heart well disposed, no one ever cares for the exterior.

—Anne Bronte

Closing Song

“Thank You for Your Loving Hands”

Group Business

Homework for the next meeting.

Homework: Beauty

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Despite being universally experienced and valued, beauty is not easily defined. It seems to be that which gives pleasure to the senses, especially sight, but it also appeals to our minds and emotions.

Many people define beauty as that which brings enjoyment to the person who looks or contemplates. When we say something is beautiful, are we recommending to others that they should take delight in it? We know that beauty is subjective, but can it be objective? Can we argue rationally about whether something is beautiful?

Is beauty a cultural thing, based on the common consensus of the time? Or is there a “true beauty,” which we find in all cultures and times? Is natural beauty ever better than constructed beauty, such as in art or music? What about augmented beauty? There is a dark side to beauty. Physical beauty is highly valued in American society and has caused eating disorders and a huge rise in plastic surgery.

Do beauty and happiness go together?

Though we travel the world over to find the beautiful, we must carry it with us
or we find it not.

—*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Our hearts are drunk with a beauty our eyes could never see.

—*George W. Russell*

By plucking her petals, you do not gather the beauty of the flower.

—*Rabindrath Tagore*

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul.

—*John Muir*

Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart.

—*Kahlil Gibran*

That which is striking and beautiful is not always good, but that which is good
is always beautiful.

—*Ninon de L'Enclos*

Some people, no matter how old they get, never lose their beauty—they merely move it from their faces
into their hearts.

—*Martin Buxbaum*

When you have only two pennies left in the world, buy a loaf of bread with one and a lily with the other.

—*Chinese Proverb*

“Beauty Tips” by Audrey Hepburn, actress, who was an underground carrier for Belgium during WW II as a teenager:

1. For attractive lips: speak words of kindness.
2. For lovely eyes: seek out the good in people.
3. For a slim figure: share your food with the hungry.
4. For beautiful hair: let a child run his or her fingers through it once a day.
5. For poise: walk with the knowledge you’ll never walk alone.
6. People: even more than things, have to be restored, renewed, revived, reclaimed, and redeemed; never throw out anybody. Remember, if you ever need a helping hand, you’ll find one at the end of your arm. As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.

7. The beauty of a woman is not in the clothes she wears, the figure that she carries, or the way she combs her hair. The beauty of a woman is seen in her eyes, because that is the doorway to her heart, the place where love resides. True beauty in a woman is reflected in her soul. It is the caring that she lovingly gives, the passion that she shows. And the beauty of a woman only grows with the passing of the years.

Questions to Ponder

- What part does beauty play in your life? Where do you find it in your life?
- Has your opinion of what is beautiful changed over the years? What caused that change?
- Do you believe that beauty is in the eye of the beholder or that you can be objective about beauty? Are you influenced by other people's opinions of what is beautiful?
- What role does beauty play in the animal world?

Suggested Activities

- Make a list of the most beautiful things you have ever seen. Do you see a recurring theme? What is it?
- Write a haiku about beauty or something you think is beautiful. (A haiku has three lines, with the following syllables in each line: first line = 5 syllables, second line = 7 syllables, and third line = 5 syllables.)
- Write a letter to teenage girls, helping them balance the media focus on physical beauty and the human reality.

Leader's Guide: Beauty

Is beauty in the eye of the beholder? Despite being universally experienced and valued, beauty is not easily defined. It seems to be that which gives pleasure to the senses, especially sight, but it also appeals to our minds and emotions.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

Ask someone to read the chalice lighting reading found in the bulletin as you light the chalice.

As many do around the world, let us begin by lighting our chalice. Today let us be reminded of beauty in all its forms as we see the light shining for us.

—Reverend Phil Silk

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows (10 min)

Ask group members to check in, telling in one or two sentences how they are doing this week. Share information about absent members.

Silence (3 min)

Start with the following words: "Get comfortable in your seat. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in, and then a deep breath out. And now just breathe gently." Then give your group the gift of three minutes of silence. Time it if you would like.

Shared Readings (5 min)

Have each person in turn read from the shared readings found in the bulletin until all the readings are finished.

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening (65 min)

Read the following quote, and then do three rounds of deep sharing and deep listening. Pay close attention to the time allotted each person to ensure that everyone gets a turn to share.

So when you are listening to somebody, completely, attentively, then you are listening not only to the words, but also to the feeling of what is being conveyed, to the whole of it, not part of it.

—Jiddu Krishnamurti

Round 1 (10 min): What role does beauty play in your life? How has this changed over the course of your life?

Round 2 (40 min): What quote rang true for you in either the bulletin or the homework? Explain how it is applicable to you.

Round 3 (15 min): Expand on something you or another member shared.

Closing Words (1 min)

Read or ask someone to read the closing words.

It is foolish to wish for beauty. Sensible people never either desire it for themselves or care about it in others. If the mind be but well cultivated, and the heart well disposed, no one ever cares for the exterior.

—Anne Brontë

Closing Song (1 min)

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business (5 min)

Pass out the homework for next time.