

Living the Questions

Chalice Lighting

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

There are simply no answers to some of the great pressing questions. You continue to live them out, making your life a worthy expression of leaning into the light. Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams*

The mystery does not get clearer by repeating the questions. Nor is it bought with going to amazing places. Until you've kept your eyes and your wanting still for fifty years, you don't begin to cross over from confusion. Rumi, *The Mystery*

How do we teach a child to have compassion: to allow people to be different; to understand that like is not equal; to experiment; to laugh; to love; to accept the fact that the most important questions a human being can ask do not have or need answers. Madeleine L'Engle, *A Circle of Quiet*

Jesus went about providing answers to questions that no one was asking and refusing to answer the questions everyone thought important. *The Jesus Myth*, Andrew Greeley

Our Questions

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Discussion, if time

Group Business

Closing

Covenant Groups

Living the Questions



Leader's Notes: Questions

Bring some 3*5 cards or similar sized paper, some extra pens, and a basket or other container.

Open as Usual

Share the Readings

After the silence, ask people to write questions on their cards.

The questions should be answers to #1 from the homework: "What are the burning questions of your life right now."

These questions should be simple sentences, ie, "What am I supposed to be doing with my life?" no explaining. People can write several questions if they wish. They will be shared anonymously.

Give people time to think and write. Then collect the cards, shuffle them, and pass them out. As you pass them out you can remark that, while it's possible that someone would get their own card back, nobody will know that but them so they should keep a straight face.

Let people read over the card they got.

Say: The questions that are deep in our heart are sacred questions, and they often touch tender areas of our lives. So we will treat these questions with special care, leaving silence between them. After you have read what is on your card, please put it in the basket.

Go around the room and let individuals read. Then pass the basket around and let everyone take back their own card.

Do your sharing rounds.

Close with the poem on the next page.

O Love, I know a lot.
I can list the capitals of Europe,
thread my way through the periodic table,
and name the last names of all the artists who ever painted in Rome.
I know a lot,
but I have so few answers.
Fewer and fewer all the time.
And the questions themselves
 get more convoluted, more subtle and cunning,
 making me wonder if I even want to know the answers.

Sometimes,
 my footing isn't so sure.
Sometimes,
 my map crumples into powder at my feet.
Sometimes,
 the lights go out, the engine seizes, the song is cut off.
And on those days, I don't need Paris or Prague,
 and I don't need answers.
 I don't even need the questions.
What I need is a squeeze of my hand,
 a shoulder on which to lean,
 a voice that says, "We'll do it together,"
 a smile that does not say "chin up" and "be tough,"
 but which simply stands close, silent,
 arms draped around my stooping shoulders.
Give me no lectures on clumsiness when I stumble.
Give me no pep talks on vision when I cannot see.
Just be there, o precious Love,
 whenever I am not strong enough to admit I am not strong.
 Be there. Hold me. And then walk with me all the way home.-----

Unknown

Homework: Living the Questions

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer. Letters to a Young Poet, Rainer Maria Rilke

Our tolerance of diversity is not just the sort that "suffers fools gladly," you see, it is the sort of tolerance which believes that truth emerges best when people share their different versions in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Our argument for pluralism comes from our theological modesty; that we know enough of truth to inform our own lives and give them meaning but not so much that we would claim it for others, much less force it upon them. This modesty is not personal passiveness but instead a true theology which suggests the largeness of the divine and the impossibility of anyone knowing everything for all time. —from a sermon by Christine Robinson

The Buddha said: It is proper that you have doubt, that you have perplexity, for a doubt has arisen in a matter which is doubtful. Now, look you Kalamas, do not be led by reports, or tradition, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference, nor by considering appearances, nor by the delight in speculative opinions, nor by seeming possibilities, nor by the idea: 'this is our teacher.' But, O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome, and wrong, and bad, then give them up . . . And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome, and good, then accept them and follow them.'

Questions

1. What are some of your most burning questions right now? How have you lived with it? How uncomfortable has it been?
2. How will you know when you find an answer?
3. Do you remember some of your burning questions of the past? How did you know when you had resolved them?
4. What authorities assist you in looking for answers?
5. What activities assist you in looking for answers?