



DISCUSSION GUIDE [January 1, 2012]

Notes for the discussion leaders are in italics.

Discussion Opener

What are some resolutions that you have made over the years? What were your most successful ones? Why?

Message Thoughts | Hope for Forgiveness

*Happy New Year! Let's start our year with HOPE. This week, Mike Bredeweg brought us the first message in the series: **Hope for Forgiveness**. He discussed whether it is easier to forgive or be forgiven. He explored God's plan not only for forgiveness but for reconciliation. Why is it that we start every New Year with great dreams and promises of making changes in our lives? Yet, more often than not, by the end of January they are forgotten? As you begin this New Year as a small group leader, what changes would you like to see in your small group? How could the small group help hold each other accountable?*

Discussion

1. Which is harder for you to forgive or ask for forgiveness?
2. What makes forgiveness so much work?
3. What is the difference between a quick "sorry" and forgiveness?
4. Read through Matthew 18:21-35
 - a. What is Jesus teaching us about forgiveness in this parable?
 - b. How is God's forgiveness connected to our forgiveness?
5. Read Psalm 32:3-5
 - a. What role does confession play in forgiveness?
6. What has been your experience with confession? Is it more painful to confess or to hold it in and live with the weight of it?
7. What are the hardest things to forgive? What do we have to let go of in order to forgive?
8. What are some of the costs of unforgiveness that you have experienced or seen in others?
9. What are some of the joys of forgiveness that you have experienced?

Prayer

Spend time this week praying for the New Year.

Ask God for help in restoring strained or broken relationships with others.