

## BiG IDEA SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Small groups that focus on the Big Idea for the week can use this guide to apply the message to life and take action. Feel free to use whatever parts of this guide best fit your group personality and time frame. Do NOT feel like you have to use every question. All verses, unless otherwise noted, are from the New International Version (NIV).

### 7.4/5.09 // TOUGH TIMES – Reach Out

**BiG IDEA:** In tough times I need God's people around me.

This session is based on material from Genea Brown, Adult Ministry Director – Community Christian Church, Shorewood campus (IL) – newthing.org

// Ice Breaker \_\_\_\_\_

**Option 1:** If you found yourself stuck in a bind, what TV or movie character/hero would you call to come help?

**Option 2:**

// Questions for Discussion \_\_\_\_\_

**Moses led the Israelites in an important battle...not by leading the charge, but by climbing to the top of a hill. He was fighting a battle many thought impossible to win. Since this was a calling from God, Moses wanted the support of his friends by his side.**

Exodus 17:8-13

*The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. 9 Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands." 10 So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. 11 As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. 12 When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. 13 So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.*

**Aaron and Hur could not change the circumstance that Moses was in. They couldn't fix it or make it all better. Despite that, they found a way to support, encourage and love Moses through it! They couldn't take on the problem by holding up the staff for him so they decided to support Moses by standing by his side and doing whatever he needed, which was to hold up his arms.**

**1. Is it easy or difficult for you to reach out and ask for help during tough times? What makes it easy or difficult to do so in your life? Have you been rejected by doing so?**

**2. Share the benefits of reaching out during tough times. Look back over verse 12. How has helping others brought you joy? How does putting the focus on others' needs put our problems in the right perspective?**

**3. Moses was a great spiritual leader. How do you think Moses felt as he sat there tired and struggling to hold up the staff when his friends came by his side and held up his arms?**

4. Share a time when you wanted to fix or change a problem for someone close to you. What did you decide to do and how did that affect the issue or the relationship?

It's good to want to help someone in time of need, but we need to make sure we're following God's direction and plan for the situation. Sometimes we can get in front of God and think we have all of the answers. This can greatly affect the outcome of a situation.

Galatians 6:2

*"Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

**In a paraphrase, the same verse says:**

*"Stoop down and REACH OUT to those who are oppressed. Share their burdens, and so complete Christ's law." (The Message)*

We can see in this verse that Jesus did not want us to do life all alone. We see throughout scripture how Jesus spent time with a small group of people He called His disciples. Jesus told his disciples to love each other the way I have loved you. We all need that type of community. Deep down we all want to feel a part of a group where there's true and authentic relationships just like Jesus had with his disciples. He wants us to feel close to others and even closer to Him by reaching out. And when we do it says in scripture that we are fulfilling the law of Christ.

5. When was the last time you experienced carrying someone's burdens (something worrisome or oppressive) or allowed someone to carry your burdens? How did it feel?

6. What keeps you from living out this verse? What are the obstacles in life that keep you from reaching out to others? Examples: too busy, no money, problems of my own, too selfish, etc.

7. How can you overcome those obstacles so you can start "carrying each other's burdens" in your life?

We will all face tough times. If we build a foundation on God and others we'll stand firm during those times. We can refresh each other by supporting one another through prayer and encouragement. We will find strength in knowing God is on our side and by reaching out to others.

8. Are you going through a tough time right now? Who knows about it? How can this group support you?

// Application \_\_\_\_\_

**Commit to memory Galatians 6:2**

*"Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ."*

This week call a friend that you haven't talked to in a while. Don't talk only about your life, we have a tendency to do that at times. Instead, make the topic of your conversation about what's going on in their life. Ask them how you can support and encourage them through prayer.

// Prayer \_\_\_\_\_

Pray for whatever tough times you're going through.

Pray for a growing sense of community and friendship in this group and in our church.