

## House of Belonging Discussion Guide

"A Family of All Nations" (Session 3)

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### Review:

Our mission of **Becoming like Christ, and sharing him with others** leads us to create and participate in a "House of the Lord" & a "House of Belonging."

So far we have emphasized two transformational values for our "house building" work at Bethel. Take a minute to discuss how these transformational values have helped you reflect on belonging over the past few weeks.

- Life Together
- Reaching Out

*What are some steps you want to take to more fully include these values more into how you live?*

\*Note how you as a group can continue to support each other in these desires.

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**Read:** Read Isaiah 56:1-8 aloud.

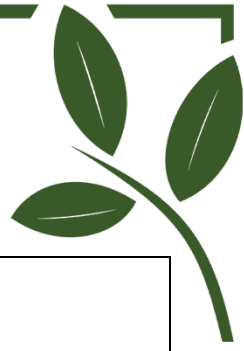
After reading, give everyone 3 minutes of silence (*set a timer*) to reflect on the passage. Consider some of the following questions during this time:

- How does this passage give me joy, encouragement, or hope?
- How does this passage challenge me?
- What does God invite us to do in response to this passage?

**Reflect:** God has a plan for "far off" people (by the way that is *all of us*)

1. What is the strength and beauty of having a strong cultural identity?  
What is a challenge that can come from this? Share among yourselves what "nation" you have come from and how this has shaped your walk with Jesus.
2. In the Old Testament, there was a basis of welcoming the foreigner and the stranger in community for worship. Take a look at a few references  
(See Exodus 12:48-49, Ruth 2:11-12, Micah 4:1-3, Isaiah 61:11, Isaiah 66:18-23)

*Why do you think this did not happen often?*



3. The focus of Isaiah 56 is about worship, calling upon God's justice and holiness to bring us together in worship. Discuss a bit what you think worship is.

Here are a few quotes for reference: (See also Romans 12:1-2)

"We must never rest until everything inside us worships God." (A. W. Tozer)

"Worship is the believer's response of all that they are - mind, emotions, will, body - to what God is and says and does." (Warren Wiersbe)

"Worship is our response to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father." (Richard J. Foster)

4. How does a focus on God, like the example from Isaiah 56, help us worship together better?
5. If God has called us to be a family of all nations, do you think the way we worship should change? How so?
6. Jesus was wise not only with how he related to people but also in how he related to people in the context of their cultures and ethnicities (Ex. John 4 with the woman at the well). How can we become wiser and more aware of other cultures around us? How can we grow in offering friendship and belonging to people from other "nations" in our church family?

*\*For other references to God's vision for a church of all nations, see also Genesis 12:1-19; Mark 11:17; Acts 1:8, 8:26-36, 10:35; Ephesians 2:11-19; Philippians 2:10-11; Revelation 5:9, 7:9*

**Summative Thought:** *Since God has called us out from among the nations in Christ, we must raise our voices in worship with the nations. We were created to be a diverse body of believers, deeply connected to one another as a family, but also distinct with our own passions, cultures and ethnicities. First, God must be the focus of our worship and community—not just what makes us unique. Second, we must embrace learning from one another. Lastly, what we learn through community with one another will change us - God uses it for his glory and our good.*

**Challenge:** The next 40 Days...Remember and embrace how God has called you to belong in Christ and with one another.

1. What are some ways that you can relate to Bethel more as your church family?
2. What does this mean for how you worship
3. What role does God want you to play in embracing all the "nations" at and around Bethel?

**Prayer:** Discuss how you as a group can support each other in these areas. Spend time in prayer for one another.