



No place like
Home

Session 1: Home is Where the Heart Is

Ephesians 2:19

Home is where the heart is, or so the saying goes, but what happens when the heart wanders? Idyllic scenes of home conjure thoughts of safety, comfort, innocence, and childhood. But when our desires put home in jeopardy, we must weigh the value we place on home against everything else. Let's delve into the concept of home and how it impacts our lives and the lives of everyone around us.

1. How would you describe the term *home*
2. What would it feel like to be without a home?
3. Share a time the church was like a home to you.

While our culture devalues the home, particularly the family of God, and challenges us to experience the world and all it has to offer, we are left at the brink of an important choice: dive into the life and love of Jesus Christ, or experience everything else. Experience only matters if we learn from it. So whether it is from our own struggles, or the stories of others' struggles, we must apply the lesson. When all is said and done, our heart still has a home-shaped hole in it only Jesus was meant to fill.

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Session 2: Home Sick

Key Scriptures:

John 3:16

Opening Remarks:

What happens when we tire of home? We set ourselves up for a bad trade. When all the positives of home only seem like restraints, and all the negatives of leaving home are downplayed, we may foolishly step onto a path leading to deep disappointment. Yet when we leave home, we see from Scripture and personal testimonies the pain of that path.

Watch the Session 2 Video

Discussion Questions:

1. What could cause someone to leave home?
2. If you found yourself far away from home, isolated from your family, what might be some perceived barriers to returning home?
3. How would you react when a long-lost family member returned home?

Closing Remarks:

Tragically, home is one of those familiar places that can be taken for granted. No matter how good or nurturing a home environment is, there will always be opportunities to walk down another path. But whether from curiosity or disillusionment or rebellion, the path leading away from our Father will always end in dissatisfaction and loneliness. Though the world likes to frame this rebellion and exploration as normal, it is time for the church to take a stand, declaring that the road less traveled is homeward bound.

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Session 3: There is No Place Like Home

Luke 15:20-24

We all know that ache of feeling homesick. It's a gnawing emptiness telling you that something very important to you is absent. This is a feeling every prodigal is familiar with. Like any feeling, it can be explored or ignored, but it serves as an anchor in the spirit, calling you back to where you belong.

Discussion Questions:

1. What feelings and thoughts do you associate with being homesick?
2. What are some deciding factors that determine whether someone might act on the feeling of homesickness?
3. How can the family of God keep faith in the return of prodigals and pray for the feeling of homesickness to push them to come back home?

When the pleasure ends, when the high subsides, when the friends go home, the prodigal is left alone with their thoughts and feelings. In this moment, they are struck with the brevity of their joys and the growing expanse of their loneliness, and again they are faced with a choice. Do they pick up the pieces and try it all again, grappling for some similar feeling, or do they surrender to the homesickness, swallow their pride and insecurities, and head back home? How will the church react? Will we reject them, or come running with open arms ready to embrace them?

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Session 4: Welcome Home

Key Scripture:

Luke 15:25-27

Opening Remarks:

How does the family of God respond to prodigals? In a world where the weak are abandoned and broken things are discarded, the church is called to be different. The family of God must have faith in the fallen and an unflinching love for prodigals in the face of betrayal and disownment, for such were some of us. In this final session, let's discuss what reunion looks like.

Watch the Session 4 Video

Discussion Questions:

1. How should the family of God respond to prodigals leaving home?
2. How should the family of God respond to prodigals returning home?
3. What does the story of the prodigal's brother teach us?

Closing Remarks:

When the shape of his son crested over the hill on the horizon, the father could already feel excitement, nurtured by hope and grounded by love. His eyes had looked that direction every day, feeling the distance between them like an ache. It was love that restrained him from forcing his son to stay, it was love that prayed for him every day he saw his empty chair, and it was love that gave the father the strength to run with arms wide, ready to embrace his son. If there is a prodigal in your life, never lose faith. God is not done writing their story. The season of reunion slowly drains all the hurt from the seasons of absence, leaving only the sweet fruit of reconciliation.

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