

TOOL: Processing Questions

One hour of significant friendship • Weekly



Our lives are busy and hectic, and we've learned habits around question-asking that help us feel connected without actually often going below the surface. We've learned to ask the kinds of questions and offer the kinds of answers that allow us to hurry through our conversations instead of engaging with the topics that might disrupt our days. These are the types of conversions that invite us to slow down enough to really feel and think and step into one another's pain.

Part of pursuing significant friendships is learning to ask questions and reflect and consider. This also includes allowing yourself to be asked those questions and give honest answers as well.

Practice

For this practice, we're providing some questions you can go through with your Praxis group or friends. Or even, with God!

BEFORE WE BEGIN

We can't honestly access the answers to deeper questions when we're distracted or on the go. Emotions can be intrusive, but they can also be shy. To truly process the deeper things in life takes space and time.

- If you're answering these questions with friends - take some time to find a space and place that is conducive. For example, plan a dinner that is slow and steady - with no plans after.
- If you're answering these questions with God - set aside a time and place where you're going to be able to truly process without needing to get to the next thing on your list or calendar.

GROUND RULES

Vulnerability is a thing that is hard for a reason. It's God's way of helping us make sure we don't just throw out our deepest and more personal thoughts without some

measure of trust being cultivated first. Make sure that your table makes space for vulnerability without requiring it. Consider the elements that go into providing a space where people can go deeper in a safe and confidential way, without fear of judgement.

We don't need to use personal things about ourselves to cultivate trust. Vulnerability will always feel like a risk, but it shouldn't feel like a gamble. Trust is earned. We've included a lot of questions below at various levels of intimacy so that people could select what they are comfortable sharing.

PROCESSING QUESTIONS

- When was the last time you felt truly connected to God and what was that like?
- When was the last time you felt truly connected to people and what was that like?
- If you were to slow down, can you notice any feelings or thoughts you are trying to outrun?
- When was the last time you felt truly happy with your life?
- If you could ask God for anything, what would it be?
- What is one characteristic of God you wish God would help you believe more fully?
- How has your view of God changed in the past years?
- What patterns or choices do you see in your life that are keeping you from cultivating healthier habits?
- If you could change anything in your life, what would it be?
- When was the last time you felt like you were flourishing in life?
- What is an area of life where you need healing?
- What is one unanswered prayer in your life and how has that impacted you and God?
- If you were describing your relationship with God to a marriage counselor, what would you say?
- How comfortable are you with vulnerability?
- How have you seen friendship go wrong?
- The Bible describes God as a spouse, parent, friend, lover - which of these metaphors are you most comfortable with? Which are you least comfortable with?
- What do you truly want out of friendship and relationships? Do you feel your expectations are too high or too low?
- Are there any dreams in your life that you have stopped dreaming that you could begin dreaming about again?
- What's your relationship like with hope? Does it feel foolish, dangerous, easy?

Take time with your friends and/or with God to go through some of these questions together. Ask God to give you openness and trust to share with each other and grow in depth and connection.

Debrief your experience

After practicing with this tool, debrief your experience with your Praxis Group. Below are some questions to process together:

- Check in on life. (Where are you experiencing Christ's presence this week? What burdens are you carrying?)
- What did you learn from this practice?
- Describe your experience with this practice. (What feelings came up, what went well, what got in the way? How has it impacted your relationship with God?)
- What is the next step for you?