

# **Questions God Asks Us**

## **Chapter 2: Where is your brother?**



### **Welcome**

- What question or insight from the last gathering have you continued to think about or wonder about (if any)? Have the readings or discussion changed how you connect with God or with others in any way?

### **Opening Question**

- Tell about someone who has extended a simple act of kindness to you. What did they share with you? What were the circumstances?
- Who is someone that you would consider to be "family" even though you are not related? In other words, who is someone you are so close to that you consider them to be like your family?

### **Responsive Reading – Psalm 139**

One: O LORD, you have searched me and known me.

All: You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
      you discern my thoughts from far away.

One: You search out my path and my lying down

All: You are acquainted with all my ways.

One: Where can I go from your spirit?

      Or where can I flee from your presence?

All: If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
      if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.

One: If I take the wings of the morning

      and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,

All: Even there your hand shall lead me,

      and your right hand shall hold me fast. Amen.

### **Covenant Review**

*Take a look at your covenant (from the first gathering) and talk about any suggestions or clarifications. Share logistical details (dates/times/locations). Reflect for a moment on this question in silence or share together:*

- How can you contribute to making this group a meaningful experience for yourself and for others?

## Bible Text

### Read Genesis 4: 1-9 (NRSVUE)

<sup>1</sup>Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." <sup>2</sup>Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup>In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, <sup>4</sup>and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup>but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. <sup>6</sup>The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup>If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

<sup>8</sup>Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him. <sup>9</sup>Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?"

## Questions

1. What did you notice in the Bible reading or in the chapter? What spoke to you or surprised you? What resonated with you? What was a new idea?

*Allow for a few minutes of silence as you gather your thoughts.*

2. What portions of this text are challenging? What portions of the text are hopeful or comforting?
3. Are we responsible for our brothers and sisters or for others around us? How do you work out the extent and limits of your responsibility toward others? In other words, where do you draw the line on the limits of this responsibility?
4. Has there been a situation in your life when God pushed you to expand these limits of care and responsibility for another person? What did you learn from that experience? - Alternatively, has there been a time in your life when someone else took a deep (and perhaps unexpected) responsibility for your well-being? What difference did that make in your life...and what did it mean to you?
5. What is your reaction to the way that God interacts with Cain throughout the story in Genesis 4? What does this say about God? What does God's question (Where is your brother?) reveal about God's expectation of our responsibility toward others?
6. How should Jesus' command to "love your neighbor as yourself" affect the way we treat and live among our neighbors, enemies, and the wider world? Describe some ways that you have learned to live out this command within these various relationships.
7. In what ways is God calling you to exercise responsibility toward others?

8. What are some ways to continue to think about this question in the coming week? How could you carve out some time for prayer, using this question as the starting place?

## **What's Next?**

- At the end of the small group or between gatherings, spend some time in silent reflection using "Answering God's Question" at the end of the chapter. Spend time praying for one or more of these areas:
  - Pray for your friends, family members and/or neighbors. Is there a concrete way to show your care?
  - Pray for someone you've found challenging. If it feels right in your heart, consider reaching out. Pray for a new sense of peace in the relationship.
  - Pray about the wider community or world. What next step could you take to make a difference in an area that moves your heart?

## **Closing Prayer - Share the date, location and reading for the next gathering.**

Loving and ever-present God, when we awaken and when we sleep, you are there; in our striving and in our stillness, you are there; in our failure and in our success, you are there; in living and in dying you are there. We thank you for your enduring love that will never leave us and will always sustain us. Amen.

One: God is with you no matter what. Go, now, in God's presence and love.

*Thank you to Pastor Josh Allen from Brentwood Hills Church of Christ (Nashville, TN) for writing many of the questions and reflection prompts in this guide and for sharing permission to use them with the Incarnation community.*

*This outline is to be used alongside Questions God Asks Us by Trevor Hudson. Some of the questions and reflection prompts listed here also come from Questions God Asks Us.*

*Scripture quotations marked NRSVUE are taken from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition. Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. See also [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com).*