

## Group Discussion Guidelines for the *Going There* Series & Election Season

As we navigate the fall campaign season, tension and anxiety often increase among people, and conversations in small groups (either before or during the group discussion) can turn toward emotionally charged and divisive topics.

In September, we will have a three-week series called “*Going There: truth, politics, sex*” that will encourage us to look to God for our foundation on these hot topics. Even after this series, as the national election approaches, people in your group may bring up political or polarizing topics.

Here are some simple tips for you as you guide your group in these discussions.

1. **Act decisively to keep the conversation focused.** The goal of any group (including the *Going There* series) is to dig into God’s Word and seek his perspective. Don’t be afraid to jump in and bring the conversation back on topic to the specific Scripture or specific question being asked. Politics and social issues are polarizing, and chances are you have someone in your group on the opposite side of an issue or with a lived experience you don’t know about. To shepherd your group well and to honor everyone, don’t hesitate to jump in and bring it back on topic. Do yourself a favor before you start by giving your group a heads-up that you will guard the conversation against becoming political or argumentative.
2. **Keep conversations focused on personal application and growth.** Whatever the topic, keep discussing what we are learning and how the material personally challenges us. This will help move the conversation away from pointing out flaws in others and toward sharing how we are all growing and being encouraged. It is often tempting to share how others need to apply God’s Word but remind your group that we must begin by letting God’s Word change our hearts first.
3. **Unity is the goal. Love is the way.** In the Bible, the early church leader, Paul, spends much of his letters to churches coaching them on pursuing unity. When we, as followers of Jesus, keep faith, hope, and love as the main things, that’s precisely what happens. When it comes to people outside the church, remember that Jesus regularly taught us that we should love our enemies. Help keep your group focused on these essentials. Remind them of the important foundations of unity and love. Work together to get practical in how you can live in ways that honor Jesus and represent him well.
4. **Please let us know if a conversation becomes contentious.** Reach out to one of the staff members on the Next Steps Team (Chip Ewald: [ChipE@wschurch.org](mailto:ChipE@wschurch.org), Kayla Hulskotter: [KaylaH@wschurch.org](mailto:KaylaH@wschurch.org), Bethany Spear: [bethanys@wschurch.org](mailto:bethanys@wschurch.org)) so that we can coach and support you as you lead.

We are praying for you all as you lead through this season!



## Going There 3 – The Two Will Become One Flesh Discussion & Reflection Guide

### Message & Scripture Discussion

- **When in your life have you felt truly loved?**
  - **What stood out to you from Sunday's service?** How did you sense God at work in you through the songs, the story video, the message, and being together with others as part of the church? (The message's main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
  - **Read Matthew 19:1-6.** What do you learn about Jesus' understanding of marriage and sex from this passage?
  - Eddie shared, "It is always in our best interest to ask, 'What is the Creator's intended design for me?'" **Take a moment to write down some quick answers to that question.** What is God's design for me – my body and sexuality? How do I know?
  - **Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.** What stands out to you as you read this passage? **What might it look like to honor God with your body?**
  - Another point Eddie emphasized is that all of us are sexually broken in some way, but that God offers forgiveness and healing. **How do you react to this?**
  - Early in his message, Eddie shared this: "I want you to be clear-eyed about 3 things when you leave today:
    - First, the way God designed sex is good and good for us.
    - Second, the enemy's distortions of sex are dishonoring to God and damaging to us.
    - Third, the way God can restore the sexually broken is beautiful and powerful.
- As you look at those three things, what stands out to you? Are you able to see these things clearly, or do you need to explore any of these more?**
- **Is there anything else from the message you want to explore more deeply this week?**

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or with a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at [info@wschurch.org](mailto:info@wschurch.org).

### **God and Sexuality Resources - <https://www.wschurch.org/GoingThereResources>**

Need some resources for navigating specific topics around God's design for sexuality? Are you a parent and want to be an intentional guide for your kids in this area? We have pulled together a few recommendations to help you along the way. We hope these resources help you learn and grow in love. While West Side does not endorse every idea presented by every author, we recognize that we can listen to teaching and submit to the Bible as our ultimate authority (Acts 17:11).

## Message Main Points & Scripture

- **Every person is a sexual being.**
- **Sex is a gift from God that should be celebrated.**
- **God's design for sex.**
- Matthew 19:4 - "Haven't you read the Scriptures? They record that from the beginning 'God made them male and female.' And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.'"
- **The more unfamiliar people are with the Bible, the more susceptible they are to distorted views about sex.**
- **"What is the Creator's intended design for me?"**
- Luke 22:42 - "Not my will, but yours be done."
- 1 Corinthians 6:18 - "Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body."
- **Righteous sex is the best sex.**
- **Clarify what distorted sex is.**
- ***Porneia***
- **All sexual activity that does not involve a man and woman who are married is *porneia*.**
- 1 Corinthians 6:13 - "You can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies."
- Romans 12:1-2 - "Dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind God will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think."
- Matthew 5:28 - "Anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."
- **God can fully restore sexually broken people.**
- Romans 1:29 - "Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent, proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents."
- Romans 3:23 - "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."