Week of Oct 11, 2026

Small Group Study Guide

THE BRANCH CHURCH

ICE BREAKER

- Go around the group and share one "perk" of getting older that you have personally experienced or observed. Keep it lighthearted.

STUDY

1. **Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 together as a group.** Which of the "times" listed resonates most with the season of life you are currently in? Why?

2. **In Ecclesiastes, Solomon writes that God makes everything appropriate or fitting in its time.** a) Which specific seasons or experiences on his list feel most challenging for you to see as purposeful or intentional? b) What makes accepting those particular seasons so tough?

3. **Pastor Chris pointed out that Solomon does not have the full picture of Scripture the way we do, and yet Ecclesiastes still has an important place in our lives.** What do you think we gain from reading a book like Ecclesiastes that we might not get from other parts of Scripture?

4. **The sermon described two common tendencies people have in hard times and good times — 1. blaming God instead of looking for God in the hard times, and 2. forgetting God instead of looking for God in the good times.** Which of those two tendencies do you find yourself more prone to and why?

5. **Some believers treat mourning as a lack of faith, while others treat rejoicing as a lack of awareness about the world's pain.** Have you ever experienced either of those pressures — from others or from yourself? How did it affect you?

6. **Read Ecclesiastes 4:7-12 together. Solomon calls a man living completely alone something meaningless.** What does that stir up in you? Do you think most people in our culture would agree or disagree with Solomon's assessment, and why?

7. **Think about the story shared of the golfer who won a major tournament and wept at the airport because he had no one to call.** a) What does that story reveal about the relationship between achievement and community? b) Have you ever experienced a version of that feeling yourself?

8. **Solomon writes in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that God has set eternity in the human heart, yet no one can fully understand what God has done from beginning to end. Pastor Chris described this as an "eternal itch" that temporary things cannot scratch.** Where have you noticed this itch in your own life — in good times, in hard times, or both?

9. **Henri Nouwen said — that a meaningful life is a slow discovery of the mortality of all that is created so that we can appreciate its beauty without clinging to it as if it were a lasting possession.** a) What is something good in your life right now that you may be clinging to too tightly? b) What would it look like to enjoy it without being held hostage to it?

10. **Jesus told His disciples in John 13:7 that they would not understand what He was doing in that moment, but that later they would understand.** Can you think of a "time" in your past that was confusing or painful while you were in it, but that you can now look back on and see what God may have been doing? Share that with the group if you are willing.

11. **Pastor Chris closed with the cross — described as the worst moment in history, and yet the moment where the One beyond time was most at work within time.** How does the cross change the way you approach your current season, whether it is a good one or a hard one?

12. **Psalm 31:15-16 expresses the idea that our times are in God's hands and asks for His face to shine on us.** What would it look like practically for you to surrender your current "time" to God this week?

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REFLECT

- The life of faith is lived more by promises than by explanations. Identify one promise from Scripture that speaks directly to the season of life you are in right now. Share that with the group and write it out and post it in a place where you will see it daily this week.

PRAY

- Thank God that He is present and sovereign in every season of life.
- Ask Him to help each person in the group recognize the holy ground in their current "time."
- Pray for anyone in the group who is going through a particularly hard season.
- Surrender your times — individually and as a group — into His hands.