

## 2026-07-01 Small Group Guide

### Small Group Guide: The Dilemma of Delay

#### Opening Prayer

Begin by asking God to give your group wisdom and understanding as you discuss His Word together.

#### Sermon Summary

Pastor Steve explored the concept of delayed judgment in God's timing, using the prophet Amos and the book of Genesis to illustrate how God's warnings often come long before their fulfillment. The sermon challenges us to live with spiritual awareness and readiness rather than presuming on God's patience or living in fear of the future.

#### Key Takeaways

God's timing is not our timing - The fulfillment of Amos's prophecies took 100-150 years, yet God's word never fails to accomplish its purpose.

Delay doesn't mean denial - Just because judgment or consequences are delayed doesn't mean they won't come.

We should live with holy fear, not paralyzing dread - There's a difference between respecting God's power and living in constant anxiety.

Spiritual stability comes from faith, not circumstances - Good times don't necessarily mean God's blessing; hard times don't necessarily mean God's absence.

The consequences of sin ripple outward - Like Adam and Eve discovered, our choices affect others beyond ourselves.

#### Discussion Questions

##### Understanding the Message

Opening Question: What stood out to you most from this sermon? Was there a particular phrase or concept that caught your attention?

Pastor Steve mentioned the "dilemma of delay" - the period between when God warns and when consequences come. Can you think of biblical examples (besides Amos) where this pattern appears?

Read 2 Kings 15:27-29 and 17:1-6. What do these passages reveal about God's patience and His ultimate follow-through on His word?

### Personal Reflection

Pastor Steve asked, "How many of us have cried tears for those people?" referring to disaster victims we don't know personally. Why is it so easy to become emotionally distant from suffering that doesn't directly affect us? How should Christians respond differently?

The sermon contrasted two responses to delay: dread or presumption (thinking God's grace means we can keep sinning). Which temptation do you struggle with more? Why?

Pastor Steve said, "If we panic, we're going to miss the presence of God." Think of a time when panic or anxiety prevented you from experiencing God's peace. What helped you return to stability?

### Going Deeper

Read Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-7. How much time do you think passed between God's warning and Adam and Eve's disobedience? Does the timing matter? Why or why not?

Pastor Steve suggested that Adam and Eve might not have fully understood what "death" meant when God warned them. How does our incomplete understanding of God's warnings affect our obedience today?

The sermon stated: "God doesn't owe me a thing. Every great day that he gives me, it's not because... I deserve it." How does this perspective change the way we approach both blessings and hardships?

Challenge Question: Pastor Steve noted that after 9/11, churches were packed, but now "there's no impending disaster or doom haunting us out here right now." How can we maintain spiritual urgency and devotion when life feels comfortable and safe?

## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

Gratitude Practice: Each day, thank God for one thing you don't deserve but have received through His grace.

Scripture Meditation: Read one passage about God's patience and timing each day (suggestions: 2 Peter 3:8-9, Habakkuk 2:3, Ecclesiastes 3:1-8, Romans 2:4). Journal about what God is teaching you.

Emotional Check-In: When you feel anxious or presumptuous this week, pause and ask: "God, what are you trying to tell me right now? Am I trusting in my circumstances or in You?"

Ripple Effect Reflection: Identify one area where your sin might be affecting others. Confess it to God and, if appropriate, to the person affected. Take steps toward change.

Readiness Assessment: Honestly evaluate: If Jesus returned today or you faced Him tonight, would you be ready? What needs to change in your daily walk with Him?

## Going Forward

### Memory Verse

"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." - 2 Peter 3:9

### Prayer Focus

For wisdom to discern God's voice in our daily lives

For stability in faith regardless of circumstances

For courage to live with urgency without fear

For awareness of how our choices affect others

For those facing disasters and hardships around the world

### Closing Reflection

Pastor Steve ended with this powerful reminder: "Somewhere along our faith has to become this stabilizer that we know on our walk with God... We don't jump off either side into the deep end. We just begin to stabilize."

Final Question: What is one specific way you can become more spiritually stable this week, trusting in God rather than your circumstances?

### Leader Notes

Be sensitive to group members who may be facing current hardships or anxieties

Encourage honest sharing without judgment

Don't feel pressured to answer every question - some are meant to provoke ongoing reflection

Consider sharing your own struggles with presumption or dread to model vulnerability

End on a note of hope: God's delays are often displays of His mercy

"It's his kindness that leads us to repentance, but we've got to be willing to, number one, recognize his kindness, and number two, we need to repent, or else his kindness didn't do anything for us."