

Week 1 Group Session

Group Session

Connect (0–10 minutes)

Purpose: Normalize the experience of silence and create safety for honesty.

Choose one:

- When God feels silent, what do you usually assume?
- Is silence harder for you than receiving an answer you don't like? Why?
- How do you typically respond when prayers feel unanswered?

Leader Note: Do not correct or spiritualize responses yet. Let experience be named.

Teaching (15 minutes — FULL SCRIPT)

Where Are You, God?

There are few things more unsettling in the Christian life than praying faithfully and hearing nothing in return.

Not rejection.

Not hardship.

Not even suffering.

But silence.

Silence leaves room for doubt to grow. It creates space for assumptions. And if we're honest, silence often feels personal. We begin to wonder whether God has turned away, lost interest, or simply moved on.

Psalm 13 gives voice to that experience.

David opens the psalm with four haunting words: **“How long, O Lord?”**

He repeats them again and again. This is not a polite prayer. It is not carefully phrased. It is raw, emotional, and unfiltered.

And Scripture preserves it for us.

That alone tells us something important: God invites honest faith, not polished performance.

David does not deny his pain. He does not pretend confidence he does not feel. He brings his confusion, fear, and frustration directly into God's presence. That matters, because many believers respond to silence by pulling away.

Silence tempts us to withdraw.

David does the opposite. He stays near.

Psalm 13 shows us the difference between unbelief and lament.

Unbelief says, "God is silent, so I'm done trusting Him."

Lament says, "God feels silent, so I'm coming closer."

David feels forgotten. He feels unseen. He feels as though God has hidden His face. Yet he keeps praying. He keeps addressing God by name. He keeps bringing his heart into the relationship.

That is faith.

The psalm moves through three movements: complaint, petition, and trust. And what is striking is that trust appears **before circumstances change**.

David does not wait for answers before trusting God's character. He anchors himself in what he knows to be true—God's steadfast love.

Silence does not mean abandonment.

Silence does not mean punishment.

Silence does not mean God has left.

Throughout Scripture, faithful people experience seasons where God feels distant. Job cries out. The prophets plead. Even Jesus, on the cross, cries, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"*

Silence is not the absence of faith.

It is often the place where faith is formed.

God is more committed to shaping our trust than providing immediate clarity. And Psalm 13 teaches us that faithfulness does not require answers—it requires nearness.

This is the truth that will anchor our entire study:

God's silence does not mean God's absence.

Discussion (50–55 minutes)

Movement 1 — Instruction

What Is True About God?

Scripture (BSB): Psalm 13

How Long, O LORD?

For the choirmaster. A Psalm of David.

- 1 How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me?
- 2 How long must I wrestle in my soul, with sorrow in my heart each day? How long will my enemy dominate me?
- 3 Consider me and respond, O LORD my God. Give light to my eyes, lest I sleep in death,
- 4 lest my enemy say, “I have overcome him,” and my foes rejoice when I fall.
- 5 But I have trusted in Your loving devotion; my heart will rejoice in Your salvation.
- 6 I will sing to the LORD, for He has been good to me.

- What does this psalm reveal about God’s character?
- What does it show us about how God invites His people to speak to Him?
- How does God’s steadfast love frame David’s prayer?

Leader Note: Keep the focus on who God is before moving inward.

Movement 2 — Conviction

What Does This Psalm Expose in Us?

- What emotions does David bring honestly before God?
- Which of those emotions resonate most with your own experience?
- What do seasons of silence tend to expose in your faith?

Leader Prompt: “Silence doesn’t create doubt—it reveals it.”

Movement 3 — Correction

How Does Scripture Reframe Our Assumptions?

- How does Psalm 13 correct the idea that silence equals abandonment?
 - What assumptions about God does David refuse to accept?
 - How might this psalm reshape how you interpret silence?
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Movement 4 — Training

What Does Staying Near God Look Like Practically?

- How is lament different from withdrawal?
- What practices help you remain present with God when clarity is missing?
- What might faithful endurance look like in this season?

Leader Note: Let Scripture define faithfulness—not emotional resolution.

Movement 5 — Mission

How Does Staying Near God Shape the Way We Love Others?

- How does withdrawing from God affect our relationships with others?
- Who is impacted by whether we stay near God or pull away?
- How might honest faith become a quiet witness to others walking through silence?

Leader Prompt: “Nearness to God shapes nearness to people.”

Commit & Send (5–10 minutes)

Shared Confession: **God’s silence does not mean God’s absence.**

Prayer of Sending: “God, teach us to stay near You and love faithfully even when answers are slow.”

