

**Icebreaker:**

Some people use the phrase "heaven on earth." What feels like a little bit of heaven on earth to you, if anything?

1. Do you think very often what eternity will be like? Is Revelation 21:1-5 similar to or different from what you've thought about eternity?
2. When you think of heaven, do you think of escaping earth or heaven coming to earth?
3. In verses 3-4, what in that list is the most meaningful to you, that you look forward to the most? What do you think is missing from this list?
4. Of all the qualities of life that God offers (i.e. hope, joy, peace, love, community, life), which are you most excited about experiencing in a more complete way in the new earth with God?
5. Is there suffering in your life that you are looking forward to being resolved?
6. Read Galatians 6:2. How do you think we carry the burdens of those suffering?
7. Have you experienced others carrying your burdens (sin, brokenness, grief, family burdens, financial burdens)? In what ways has that happened for you?

**Prayer:**

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

**prayer requests**

- > Prayers of healing for Denny Baldauf and Robert Neal.
- > Prayers of comfort for the family and friends of Barbara Sloop in her passing and for Jim and Heather Lehr in the death of Jim's mom.

[The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at [zpc.org/prayer](http://zpc.org/prayer).]

- > Pray for the men of the Jeremiah House. May they feel the love of Jesus Christ through our ZPC family.
- > Bless our children as they grow in their faith and may they know how much they are loved by God. Pray for current volunteers and leaders as well as new ones.

The theme this week is "no suffering." It comes along with the promises of the new heaven and new earth in Revelation 21. If time allows, you might read all of Revelation 21 and 22 to get a summary view from John for what the new Jerusalem and new earth will be like. As Christians, we long to believe in heaven, especially when we lose a friend or loved one. We look forward to what God offers in heaven. God promises, through John's Revelation, that there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain. This is good news. But what does that look like as we live life – building for God's kingdom here and now?

1. Most human cultures in history have had some thoughts about eternal life or heaven. For many, it seems like we don't know much, but we think maybe it will be a beautiful place, peaceful and joyful. Revelation 21 and 22 give us a glimpse of eternity with God, with a new heaven and new earth. Is this what you think heaven will be like?
2. Our popular culture, and many in evangelical Christianity in the last century or so, have described heaven as an escape from a decaying world. While it is true there is much trouble in the world, the book of Revelation describes God making "all things new." Revelation 21 says that there will be new heaven and new earth, and most scholars think this earth will be made new in an amazing way and that eventually this is where all believers will live with God.
3. The list in verses 3-4 can include: God dwelling with people, God wiping every tear, no more death, mourning, crying, or pain. Of these, which is the most meaningful to you? Do you think the list is missing some things that will be included in heaven or excluded from heaven?
4. This is an opinion question for each person to answer how he or she sees fit. Ask each group member what they want in a more "complete" way? Joy, hope, life, community, health, peace, or love?
5. This is a reflective question for your group members. If they need help you might give them some options: Do they suffer physically and need healing? Are their bodies deteriorating? Do they have broken relationships that need mending? Do they long to be reunited with a loved one who died? Do they want to be done with temptation, worry, anxiety, and depression for themselves or loved ones?
6. To carry each other's burdens is to fulfill the law of Christ, Galatians 6:2. We can do this by helping with financial concerns, with grief, with sickness, with advocating for someone in need. We may also help someone who is struggling with sin, or with an emotional need. Often we can start with listening to (and praying for) a friend in need, and see what we can help them carry.
7. Encourage your group members to be appropriately transparent here re: how someone has helped/served them. You may begin by sharing how someone has helped you by carrying a burden for you. You can give your group examples such as financial help, brokenness, sickness, grieving for a lost family member, or help when you were hurting emotionally – anxious, worried, or relationship problems.