



Church Land Theology: Discussion Guide for Congregations

SESSION II for churches that do not own land

See the discussion guide for churches that own land if that one is more appropriate for your context.

MCCN intern Andrew Hudson led a series of group interviews over the past year, asking questions like the ones below. Choose the ones that are most appropriate to your context. You may uncover a lot about your relationship with land that was hiding in plain sight!

History

1. What is the story of the land surrounding your meeting place?
 - Pre-settlers, if it was colonized.
 - Up through your congregation's arrival and today?

As you tell the story, where do you slow down and give detail? Where do you skip over large swaths of time?

2. Can you picture what ecosystem was in place around your meeting place before it was "modernized?" Would that original ecosystem re-emerge if it was allowed to, or have there been fundamental changes that would make that unlikely? The use of fill dirt is one example. How does this affect your relationship with the land?

Land Management

1. What land/property management practices do you observe in your meetingplace's neighborhood? Are there any you particularly appreciate—or question?
2. What kind of “land management” issues do you face at your individual homes or apartments? What do they require of you?
 - Physical energy?
 - Mental energy? Where do you have to figure things out?
 - Where do you find yourself at odds with yourself or with other people?
 - If you could change the ways you apportion this energy, what would you prefer?

Theology

1. In many cultures, from ancient Israel to the present, it is common to see oneself and one's group as having a relationship with the Earth. How would you describe what your congregation's relationship with your place is?
2. How is your residence in this place an expression of the Good News? How does this place offer you Good News?
3. What makes for Shalom in your place?
4. How do you experience the presence of God in your neighborhood?