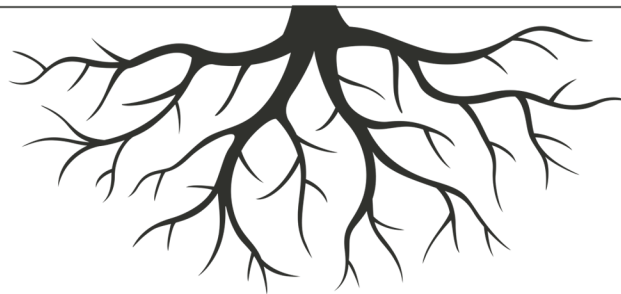


# The Emotionally Healthy Leader



STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE



Peter Scazzero

Dear Fellow Leader,

Congratulations! You are taking a large step forward to embark on a journey that has the potential to not only change your life but your entire ministry.

Transformation requires intentionality, prayer, and companions for the journey. I pray your group provides that kind of support for you as you take your next steps.

This discussion guide will lead your team into the practical application of core concepts from *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* for your specific leadership context. Moreover, you will be invited to lay a solid foundation for a deep inner life with Jesus. Why? Without it, even our best leadership practices are only marginally effective.

My prayer is that, as you courageously set aside this time to be equipped, you will experience God's love more profoundly and become the leader God intends you to be. And, in the process, may your team experience an infusion of the power of God for the sake of the world around you.

Blessings to you,

Pete

Twitter @petescazzero

# General Facilitator Guidelines

1. Be sure to read the related discussion guide questions before each session along with The Emotionally Healthy Leader chapter in your preparation. Becoming familiar with the flow of the questions will allow you to comfortably facilitate the discussion.
2. This discussion guide assumes your team is reading the corresponding chapters in *The Emotionally Healthy Leader* book before your meeting. Emphasize to group members also that they fill out each chapter's assessment before each meeting. This will lead to a deeper transformational impact—and thus is highly recommended.
3. Each session will require 55 minutes to complete. Although the nature of this material lends itself to lengthy sharing, we encourage you to pace the discussion for a 55-minute block of time. Respect everyone by beginning and ending on an agreed upon time.
4. The chapter highlights section found at the beginning of each session is meant to provide a few points to refresh people's memory of what they have read during the week. It is not expected that you read it aloud.
5. If your group is larger than six to seven people, you may want to split into smaller groups for some of the questions so that everyone has a chance to participate and process the content adequately within the time allotted. Be sure to mention to your group that everyone always has the choice to share or not share. We invite; we don't pressure.
6. When appropriate, it will be helpful if you lead by example—being vulnerable and open with life examples from your own journey.
7. Remember, we are only experts on *our own* journey. Respect where each person is in his/her personal journey with Christ. The Holy Spirit will prompt and lead each person differently and at different paces through this material. Remember that people change slowly—and that includes you and me!

# Suggested Guidelines for the Group

## **Safety and Confidentiality**

In order to create an environment that is safe for open and honest participation, please limit your sharing to your own personal experiences. Be sensitive, kind, and generous to one another with your comments. In addition, anything personal shared within the group should not be repeated outside the group.

## **Speak for Yourself**

Use “I” statements as often as possible.

## **Silence**

It is okay to have silence between responses as the group shares, giving members the opportunity to reflect. Remember, there is no pressure to share.

## **No Fixing, No Saving, No Setting Other People Straight**

This is one of the hardest guidelines to follow. But it is vital to growing people up to be spiritually mature adults in Christ. Respect their journey and trust the process of the Holy Spirit inside of them to lead them to all truth in his time.

## **Respect Others**

Be brief in your sharing, remaining mindful that there are time limitations and others may want to share.

## **Turn to Wonder**

If you feel judgmental or defensive when someone else is sharing, ask yourself: *I wonder what brought her to this belief? I wonder what she is feeling right now? I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?*

## **Be Prepared**

To get the most out of your time together, we highly recommend that you do the between-sessions reading and the assessment. Please also bring your book with you each week.

## **Timing**

Resolve to begin on time and end on time. These sessions are designed to serve as a 55-minute introduction to each chapter. The working out of this material will take time.

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# Chapter 1:

# The Emotionally Unhealthy Leader

55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

The emotionally unhealthy leader is someone who operates in a continuous state of emotional and spiritual deficit, lacking emotional maturity and a “being *with* God” sufficient to sustain their “doing *for* God.”

When we talk about emotionally unhealthy Christian leaders, we are referring to the emotional and spiritual deficits that impact every aspect of their lives.

*Emotional deficits* are manifested primarily by a pervasive lack of awareness.

Unhealthy leaders lack awareness of their feelings, their weaknesses and limits, how their past impacts their present, and how others experience them. They also lack the capacity and skill to enter deeply into the feelings and perspectives of others. They carry these immaturities with them into their teams and everything they do.

*Spiritual deficits* typically reveal themselves when we give out more *for* God than we receive from him.

The demands and pressures of ministry and leadership make it nearly impossible for them to establish a consistent and sustainable rhythm of life. In their more honest moments, they admit that their cup with God is empty or, at best, half full, hardly overflowing with the divine joy and love they proclaim to others.

The result? Emotionally unhealthy leaders skim when building their ministries and teams.

## Discussion

*Before you begin, have someone read aloud the “Suggested Guidelines for the Group” found on page 3 of this guide.*

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “The Emotionally Unhealthy Leader.”

2. From the list below, share one characteristic of an emotionally unhealthy leader that is a challenge for you in your personal or ministry life, and briefly explain why:
  - They have low self-awareness
  - They prioritize ministry over marriage or singleness
  - They do more activity for God than their relationship with God can sustain
  - They lack a work/Sabbath rhythm
  
3. Review your “How Healthy is Your Leadership?” assessment on pp. 34-35 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself. (Note: Please allow extra time for this question if someone needs to fill out the assessment.)
  
4. If you want to become an emotionally healthy leader, sooner or later you will have to resist the pull of one or more of these unhealthy commandments:
  - It’s not success unless it’s bigger and better
  - What you do is more important than what you are
  - Superficial spirituality is okay
  - Don’t rock the boat as long as the work gets done

Which of these would you name as a struggle for you? And why?

5. What is one hope or prayer you have so that you might grow into a healthier and more Christ-like leader?

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 2, “Face Your Shadow” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper**

Determine your level of spiritual/emotional maturity by taking a personal emotionally healthy assessment at [www.emotionallyhealthy.org/personalassessment](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/personalassessment). This powerful diagnostic enables you to determine if you are an emotional infant, child, teen, or adult.



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# Chapter 2:

# Face Your Shadow

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

Your shadow is the accumulation of untamed emotions, less-than-pure motives and thoughts that, while largely unconscious, strongly influence and shape your behaviors. It is the damaged but mostly hidden version of who you are.

The shadow may erupt in various forms. Sometimes it reveals itself in sinful behaviors, such as judgmental perfectionism, outbursts of anger, jealousy, resentment, lust, greed, or bitterness. Or it may reveal itself more subtly through a need to rescue others and be liked by people, a need to be noticed, an inability to stop working, a tendency toward isolation, or rigidity.

So how does the shadow reveal itself in leadership? Here are a few examples:

- Many of us have gifts in speaking and mobilizing people. The shadow side of these gifts may be an insatiable need for affirmation.
- We value excellence. The shadow side emerges when the pursuit of excellence crosses into perfectionism that makes no allowances for mistakes.
- We are zealous for God's truth and right doctrine. The shadow emerges when our zeal prevents us from loving those who disagree with us.
- We want to see the church maximize its potential for Christ. The shadow takes over when we become so preoccupied with achieving objectives that we are unwilling or unable to listen to others and create an unsustainable pace for those serving with us.

Facing the shadow is a formidable task. The self-protective part of us can be very creative in finding what appear to be legitimate and justifiable ways to avoid it. The following are four pathways for facing your shadow:

1. Tame Your Feelings by Naming Your Feelings
2. Use a Genogram to Explore the Impact of Your Past
3. Identify the Negative Scripts Handed down to You
4. Seek Feedback from Trustworthy Sources

## Discussion

*Before you begin, have someone read aloud the "Suggested Guidelines for the Group" found on page 3 of this guide.*



1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter—"Face Your Shadow."
2. Review your "How Healthy is Your Approach to Your Shadow?" assessment on pp. 58-59 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
3. A negative script is an internalized message from the past that shapes our conscious and unconscious behaviors in the present. *For example: Don't be weak. Your worth and value are based on your performance. Don't make mistakes. Don't trust people. Conflict is dangerous. Keep the peace at all costs. Don't be angry. Be productive. Don't be sad.*  
  
What are one or two life messages (or scripts) that you received from your parents or caretakers growing up?  
  
4. How might this be negatively impacting you and your leadership today?
5. What might be one step God is inviting you to take to break the shadow's hidden power in your life (e.g. begin journaling your feelings, do the "Genogram Your Family" skill noted below, seek feedback from a mentor/mature friend/counselor)?

### Reading Assignment:

Remember to read Chapter 3, "Lead Out of Your Marriage or Singleness" before your next meeting.

### Going Deeper

Watch the online video and use the worksheet found in Appendix 3 (page 313), "Genogram Your Family," to diagram your family history. This tool that can be accessed on our website, [www.emotionallyhealthy.org/genogram](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/genogram). Completing a genogram will take you beyond a conceptual or motivational level to a place of practical application.



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# Chapter 3:

# Lead Out of Your Marriage or Singleness

55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

Understanding singleness and marriage as callings, or vocations, that point beyond ourselves to Christ must inform our self-understanding and the outworking of our leadership.

The pervasive disconnect between leadership and our status as marrieds or singles is so pronounced—and yet so pervasively considered “normal”—that only a powerful theological vision from God can reverse this dangerous state of affairs.

The unspoken message for married leaders often goes something like this: *“Seek first the kingdom of God. Build the church and everything else will be added to you. That includes a blessed marriage and family.”* The not-so-subtle message to most single leaders is: *You would have a broader, more effective ministry if you were married.*

The default thinking about marriage and singleness in standard practice goes something like this:

- A leader’s highest priority is to build an effective and successful ministry to reveal Jesus’ love to the world. Marriage or singleness is important, but secondary on the priority list.
- A leader’s connection or oneness with Jesus is separate from his or her connection to a spouse (if married) or close friends and family (if single).
- How a decision might impact a leader’s marriage or singleness is a secondary rather than primary consideration in ministry discernment and decision making.
- Leaders need to get as much training and equipping as possible to improve their leadership skills. Training and equipping for marriage or singleness is primarily for when you have problems or a crisis.

Our whole life as a leader is to bear witness to God’s love for the world. But we do so in different ways as marrieds or singles.

When leading out of your marriage:

- Marriage is your first ambition
- Marriage is your first passion
- Marriage is your loudest gospel message

When leading out of your singleness:

- Be intentional about the kind of single God has called you to be:
  - \* Vocational celibates
  - \* Dedicated celibates
- A healthy singleness is your first ambition
- A healthy singleness is your loudest gospel message

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter—"Lead Out of Your Marriage or Singleness."
2. What has been your "standard" understanding of your marriage or singleness and how it relates to your leadership?

How does that differ from what was described in this chapter?

3. Review your "Leading Out of Your Marriage or Singleness" assessment on pp. 88-89 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
4. What is your greatest challenge to lead out of your marriage or singleness? And what is your greatest fear?
5. What might be one practical step you can take as a Christian leader to make marriage or singleness your first priority as a Christ-follower?

## Reading Assignment:

Remember to read Chapter 4, "Slow Down for Loving Union" before your next meeting.

## Going Deeper

Take time before God to prayerfully re-read the sections of this chapter that particularly apply to you. Note the areas of your life where God desires to bring transformation. Consider meeting with a godly, mature single or married Christian leader whom you respect, asking them specific questions about their journeys.



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# Chapter 4:

# Slow Down for Loving Union

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

The church and the world desperately need leaders, but we will only make things worse if we don't lead God's way. When we fail to slow down for loving union, sooner or later we will reap the consequences—and they are serious, both for ourselves and for those we aim to serve.

### What Is Loving Union?

To lovingly allow God and his will to have full access in every area of our lives.

Loving union asks questions such as: To what extent is the door of our heart open to him? Have we allowed the incessant demands of leadership to so preoccupy us that we don't have time to keep that door open—continuously?

It is possible to build a church, an organization, or a team by relying only on our gifts and talents. We can serve Christ in our own energy. We can expand a ministry without thinking much of Jesus or relying on him in the process. We can preach truths we don't live. And if our efforts prove successful, few people will notice or take issue with the gaps between who we are and what we do.

In this chapter we are invited to slow down and build into our lives a structure and rhythm that make this kind of loving surrender routinely possible. We are invited to strip nonessentials from our life and make room for a larger, more expansive life in God through the development of a “Rule of Life.”

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “Slow Down for Loving Union.”

2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Experience of Loving Union” assessment on pp. 121-122 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
3. What’s preventing you from allowing God’s will and presence fuller access to your life and leadership?
4. Moses stayed away from loving union with God and took matters into his own hands when he “struck the rock with his staff” out of anger and frustration (see Numbers 20:7-12). God named his offense “rebellion and unbelief,” and prohibited him from entering the Promised Land. What “promised land” might you be sacrificing by not remaining consistently in loving union with Jesus?
5. This chapter invites us to rearrange our life around an entire new way of being a leader—through the crafting of a Rule of Life that acts as a structure that enables us to pay attention to God in everything we do.

Share one specific way God may be inviting you to slow down your life for him (e.g. silence, Scripture meditation, the Daily Office, the prayer of Examen, Sabbath keeping).

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 5, “Practice Sabbath Delight” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper**

Set apart a 1-2 hour block of time to craft your own personal Rule of Life. You will find a blank Rule of Life worksheet in Appendix 2 (page 311). A sample Rule of Life is provided on page 137 along with instructions on pp.138-139. Follow the steps outlined on those pages.



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# Chapter 5:

# Practice Sabbath Delight

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

**B**iblical Sabbath is a twenty-four-hour block of time in which we stop our work, enjoy rest, practice delight, and contemplate God.

God's Sabbath rhythm is a reflection of the rhythm that undergirds all of creation. The problem with too many leaders is that we allow our work to trespass on every other area of life, disrupting the balanced rhythm of work and rest God created for our good.

The four characteristics of practicing Sabbath:

1. Stop
2. Rest
3. Delight
4. Contemplate

There are four facets of the miracle of Sabbath to keep before us:

1. Sabbath as a core spiritual formation discipline
2. Sabbath as resistance to principalities and powers
3. Sabbath as play
4. Sabbath as a place of revelation

Sabbath observance can be rich and beautiful, but we have to be willing to create the protective container—the boundaries—that make it possible. In order to enter into it, we have to submit ourselves to concrete guidelines that distinguish Sabbath from business as usual the other six days of the week.

The key is to take the four principles of Sabbath—stop, rest, delight, and contemplate God—and build your protective container accordingly.

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “Practice Sabbath Delight.”

2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Practice of Sabbath Delight” assessment on pp. 149-150 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
3. What are examples of people, places, and/or activities that fill you with joy and delight?
4. Begin to think about your Sabbath “container.” What are some things that you would include on your “will” and “will not” list for the Sabbath? (Be sure to include unpaid work as part of your “will not” list).
5. What is one step you can take towards implementing a weekly, 24-hour Sabbath (e.g. turn your “day off” into a Sabbath, start with a 12-hour period)?

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 6, “Planning and Decision Making” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper**

Slowly read and meditate on Wayne Muller’s *Sabbath: Finding Rest, Renewal, and Delight in Our Busy Lives* (New York: Bantam Press), 1999. For free resources and FAQs, see [www.emotionallyhealthy.org/sabbath](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/sabbath).



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# Chapter 6:

# Planning and Decision Making

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

God's leaders have been making plans and decisions without him since the beginning. The only way we can know his plan is to listen carefully to his voice.

We make plans and decisions every day as leaders. Three great dangers, however, often torpedo our best intentions and efforts:

1. We Define Success Too Narrowly
2. We Make Plans and Take Action without God
3. We Go Beyond God's Limits

In contrast, emotionally healthy planning and decision making is characterized by four characteristics that need to become deeply rooted in the soil of our hearts.

1. Defining success as radically doing God's will
2. Creating a space for heart preparation
3. Praying for prudence
4. Looking for God in our limits

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on "Planning and Decision Making."



2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Practice of Planning and Decision Making” assessment on pp. 179-180 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
  
3. Our goal, when planning and making decisions, is to remain in a state of *indifference*—meaning we are completely open to the will of God, having let go of our attachments to any particular outcome. How do you think you could better prepare your heart—both personally and as a team—to be more open to the will of God?
  
4. In what way(s) might the limits of your particular ministry or team actually be a *gift* from God that he is using?
  
5. As you look at these four characteristics of emotionally healthy planning and decision-making, which do you think God is inviting you to embrace more fully today?
  - To define success as radically doing God’s will
  - To create a space for heart preparation
  - To pray for prudence
  - To look for God in our limits

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 7, “Culture and Team Building” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper:**

Take 1 hour as a team to read the Scriptures that give us insight into Jesus’ heart preparation in decision making (pp.194-195) and to discuss the poem “Fire” by Judy Brown. Use the questions and format as described on pp. 197-199 of the book.



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# Chapter 7:

# Culture and Team Building

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

**I** Creating an emotionally healthy culture and building a healthy team are among the primary tasks for every leader.

And the task for *Christian* leaders is even more demanding because the kind of culture and teams we create are to be radically different than those of the world.

Team building involves mobilizing a group of people with diverse skills who are committed to a shared vision and common goals. Culture is less concretely defined, but consists primarily of unspoken rules about “the way we do things around here.”

There are four core characteristics for emotionally healthy culture and team building. When an organizational culture and team are healthy, these things are true:

- Work performance and personal spiritual formation are inseparable.
- The elephants in the room are acknowledged and confronted.
- Time and energy are invested in the teams’ personal spiritual development.
- The quality of people’s marriages and singleness is foundational.

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “Culture and Team Building.”
2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Practice of Culture and Team Building” assessment on pp. 214-215 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.

3. Consider for a moment the team of people that you lead. What might be one or two practical things you can do to invest in their spiritual formation in Christ?
  
4. Summoning the courage to name “the elephants in the room” on our teams is one of the most challenging aspects of leadership. Share one situation where you might be overlooking immature (or perhaps inappropriate) behavior of one your team members. And what could you do to invest in their development around that issue?
  
5. What invitation might God be offering you as you look at these four characteristics of emotionally healthy culture and team building?
  - Work performance and personal spiritual formation are inseparable.
  - The elephants in the room are acknowledged and confronted.
  - Time and energy are invested in the teams’ personal spiritual development.
  - The quality of people’s marriages and singleness is foundational.

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 8, “Power and Wise Boundaries” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper**

Do Session 6, “Climb the Ladder of Integrity,” found in the *Emotionally Healthy Skills 2.0* Curriculum (see [www.emotionallyhealthy.org/the\\_ladder\\_of\\_integrity](http://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/the_ladder_of_integrity)).



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# Chapter 8:

# Power and Wise Boundaries

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

A critical need for every leader is to become aware of their power, i.e. their capacity to influence, and stewarding that power well so they are a gift to those they serve, enabling them to come more fully alive and flourish.

Few leaders have an awareness of, let alone reflect on, the nature of their God-given power. Pastors, staff leaders, ministry directors, board members, small group leaders, long-term members, donors, parents, musicians in the worship band—we all have power. The problem is that we do not understand where that power comes from, nor do we understand how to exercise it responsibly.

Every leader needs to be aware of the six primary sources of power:

1. Positional power
2. Personal power
3. “God factor” power
4. Projected power
5. Relational power
6. Cultural power

If we want to use our power well as Christ-followers, there are three things we must do:

- Identify and inventory our power
- Carefully steward our power so it comes under others
- Acknowledge and monitor dual relationships

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “Power and Wise Boundaries.”

2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Use of Power and Wise Boundaries” assessment on pp. 247-248 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.
3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being very uncomfortable and 10 being very comfortable), rate your comfort level with talking about power in leadership.
4. Name one “dual relationship” (i.e. having more than one role in someone’s life like supervisor and close friend) and one or two ways you can build in some safeguards into that relationship.
5. Identify one past experience where you have failed to set a wise boundary with another in your leadership.

How might you do it differently today in light of your learnings from this chapter?

### **Reading Assignment:**

Remember to read Chapter 9, “Endings and New Beginnings” before your next meeting.

### **Going Deeper**

Do a full personal inventory of your God-given power using the questions provided on pages 248-250 of the book (Note: Turn to pp. 250-253 to see two examples.) Take the needed time to prayerfully consider how you can steward that power so that you come under people to serve them well in Jesus’ name.



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# Chapter 9:

# Endings and New Beginnings

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55 minutes

## Chapter Highlights

Embracing endings in order to receive new beginnings is one of the fundamental tasks of the spiritual life—and this is especially true for Christian leaders.

Endings and transitions to new beginnings are poorly handled in our ministries, organizations, and teams for at least three reasons:

1. We accept the broader culture's view of endings—as failure and something to be avoided.
2. We treat endings as signs of failure rather than opportunities for something new.
3. We view endings as disconnected from our spiritual formation in Jesus.
4. We disconnect endings from our family-of-origin issues.

In healthy endings and new beginnings, we move through four phases:

- We accept that endings are a death.
- We recognize that endings and waiting in the confusing “in-between” will often take much longer than we think.
- We view endings and waiting as inextricably linked to our personal maturing in Christ.
- We affirm that endings and waiting are the gateway to new beginnings.

## Discussion

1. Briefly share what impacted you most from this chapter on “Endings and New Beginnings.”
2. Review your “How Healthy is Your Practice of Endings and New Beginnings” assessment on pp. 273-274 of the book. Then, share one or two things you learned about yourself.

3. How has your family of origin, your life experience, and/or your church background shaped your view of endings?
  
4. What do you need to let go of in your personal life and/or your leadership, and what new beginning might be standing backstage waiting to make its entrance?
  
5. Consider the four characteristics of emotionally healthy endings and new beginnings noted below. Which one is most important for you to pay attention to today?
  - We accept that endings are a death.
  - We recognize that endings and waiting in the confusing “in-between” will often take much longer than we think.
  - We view endings and waiting as inextricably linked to our personal maturing in Christ.
  - We affirm that endings and waiting are the gateway to new beginnings.

### **Going Deeper**

Insights, joys, surprising gifts, fruit, revelations, and peace from Jesus await us when we cooperate with him in this ending and new beginning process. And they are only a foretaste of what awaits us!

Take an extended time with God to ask yourself the questions found on pp. 298-299 on the inner life of an emotionally healthy leader (Face your shadow, lead out of your marriage/singleness, slow down for loving union, practice Sabbath delight) as they apply to endings and new beginnings. Be sure to journal how God speaks to you so you can better discern and cooperate with he is doing in and around you.