Session 2 - **STEP UP**

*This second session celebrates how people already serve God by serving others and encourages them to consider areas where God might be leading them to Step Up.*

* **Play Intro Video** (a brief one-minute welcome and overview from Pastor Dion).

Lord, thank you for guiding us this far. Time and again, you have proven yourself good, steadfast and faithful to your people. We are excited to be a part of your unfolding plan for St. John. We trust you to challenge us, stretch us, and enable us to step up in new and powerful ways, all to your glory. Amen. *(You may also pray as led.)*

**Opening Prayer**

**Leader: *Hopefully, you were able to find the time this last week to pray and ask God for specific ways he was leading you to move forward in your journey. We’re going to discuss those in session three. For tonight, we’re going to explore what it might look like for us as individuals to “step up” towards whatever goals God might have for us. First, let’s consider the goals laid out for St. John Church in the following video.***

* **Play Vision Video.**

**1. Why do you think the three goals Dion highlights in the video, (pursuing people like never before, mobilizing the next generation of world changers, and taking our campus to the next level) are so impactful for God’s kingdom?**

**2. How have you or someone you know benefited from these ministries at St. John?**

**3. What are some ways you have found to personally love, guide, or serve the people around you? What fruit have you seen from these opportunities?**

**Leader: *God has called the ministry of St. John to prioritize these three areas—pursuing people like never before, mobilizing the next generation of world changers, and taking our campus to the next level—because these are the ways God uses us to spread his love to our community. Many of us are already doing wonderful things to serve people in love, but we always want to be careful of becoming complacent. Let’s reflect on an interesting example from the Old Testament.***

BIBLE STORY: 1 Kings 18:1-16

(Faithful Obadiah was challenged to do even more.)

**4. Obadiah faithfully served God by hiding his Prophets in a cave and providing them food and water. What risks might he have faced for his actions?**

**5. What was Obadiah’s initial reaction to being asked to do something yet again that was risky, this time to aid Elijah (another prophet of God)?**

**6. While we may not risk our lives, we may be called upon to do things to serve others that goes above and beyond what we’re already doing. What often keeps you from doing more, especially when you feel you’ve done enough?**

**Leader: *We’re not the only ones who feel pushed to the limit. Let’s look at the end of that story we read before. Elijah went on to win a great, supernatural victory in the Lord’s name. But the wicked ruler at the time swore to execute him for it. Elijah feels stretched to the limit and complains to God.***

BIBLE STORY: 1 Kings 19:3-5, 11-18

(Elijah complains to God about his weariness for ministry)

**7. Even though Elijah had just experienced a major faith success, he followed it by immediately giving up. Why might he have responded that way?**

**8. When Elijah complained to the Lord, what was God’s question to him?**

**9. How would you answer God’s question…why are you here? Why are you a part of a faith community?**

**10. When was a time that you felt like Elijah, stretched past your limit? How did that experience impact your reliance on God?**

**11. What is the benefit in our own lives if we stretch ourselves for the sake of doing God’s work?**

**12. God refreshed Elijah by showing him he was not alone, God was with him as well as many other faihtful people. How does the reality of God’s presence and a community of faith around you, encourage you to move past your fears and discomforts to take a next step?**

**Leader: *Each and every one of us is trying to follow God in certain ways. But there is always a stretch distance between where we’re comfortable, and the larger vision that God has for us. It can get uncomfortable, but this “gap of discomfort” is where faith growth—and kingdom growth—happens!***

**Closing Prayer**

Lord, we ask you that you would keep us just uncomfortable enough to accomplish great things in your name. Open our eyes to the areas where we can be stretched to make an impact in the lives of those around us and for your kingdom. In the week ahead, we ask that you would reveal to each of us how you plan to stretch us in the next season, as we prepare to “break out” in faith. Amen