**Discussion Guide – Tough Jobs – Joseph**

 **ICE BREAKERS**

* Name something in your house that you want to get rid of but can’t (spouses and children don’t count).
* Anyone in the group have a good sibling rivalry story?

**CONNECTING**

Every family has some level of dysfunction—sometimes comical, sometimes not.

* Would anyone like to share a story from your past about family dysfunction?
* How did that affect you? Does it still affect you today?

In the message, Doug said, “God does some of his best work in the darkest places.”

* Are you more *comforted* or *troubled* by this statement?
* Does this bring to mind a life experience you’d like to share? Did God ever use a dark place to lead you to where he wanted you to be? What was the dark place, and how did God work?

In the message, Doug talked about how hopeless things must have seemed to Joseph when he was forgotten in the king’s prison. Proverbs 13:12 says, “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life.”

* Has anyone ever felt forgotten by God? Do tell.
* Does anyone have a “hope deferred” or a “dream fulfilled” story you’d like to share?

**SCRIPTURE**

Sometimes it’s hard (*really hard!*) to make sense out of the way God does things. For example, when God wants Jonah in Nineveh, He uses a storm and a fish. To put Joseph in a high place in the palace, he uses a pit and a prison.

Read Romans 11:33—36 and Isaiah 55:8—9. Based on these passages…

* What do we learn about God?
* How do these passages relate to Joseph’s story?
* Would Joseph have been right to think that God was unjust?
* Did Joseph have a right to be angry towards God?

Psalm 139:5 (NASB) says, “You have enclosed me behind and before, and you have laid your hand upon me.”

* How does the phrase *enclosed me behind and before* relate to Joseph’s life?
* What effect does this have on the way I interpret my past?

Think about Joseph’s life: favored by his father; hated by his brothers; thrown in a pit; sold into slavery; a reputation for integrity maligned; a false accusation; a prison cell; forgotten in prison. In all of this, did God ever wrong Joseph?

How can I apply Joseph’s story to my life this week?