



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Friends,

update february 2022

As I listened to the father on the other end of the phone, my mind raced, and my heart broke. He shared his angst over how to respond to one of his young children who is struggling with gender-confusion, and now wants to start puberty blockers. The family was divided over how to respond, and this man was asking all the hard questions: *Should I call my child by their new, preferred name? What about pronouns? If I disagree with my wife over medical treatment for my child, will it escalate to a legal battle? How do I love my child with God's truth, even though I'm afraid they will become suicidal?* Lord, what was I supposed to say to him? And yet, he called Portland Fellowship for a reason, looking for answers and guidance.

Over the years, whenever I get these kinds of calls, the Lord has always been faithful to give me enough grace and compassion to respond with whatever words of encouragement He gives me in the moment. However, there have been many times when I hung up the phone and thought to myself, "I wish I had more answers for this person," or "I hope and pray they find someone in their area that they can connect with." After all, Portland Fellowship is just a small local ministry in one city—historically, if someone wasn't in or near Portland, the best resources I could offer were books or other ministry websites. Thankfully, today, we are excited and proud to be able to offer a new online resource for families and friends with LGBTQ loved ones: the Hope Group Zoom program.



We recently updated our Hope Group Online video series (www.hopegrouponline.com), which allows participants to work through ten different video lessons at their own pace. At the same time, we know the sexual and relational brokenness that affects families of LGBTQ loved ones is painful, confusing, and often isolating. To encourage personal connection, encouragement and support, our new Hope Group Zoom program offers families and friends the opportunity to connect and grow together online, from all over the United States and beyond.

The Hope Group Zoom program launched last month, and so far, we have over forty people gathering monthly on the first and third Thursdays to process important topics, such as *Disclosure, Grief, Roots of Sexual Brokenness, Family Dynamics, Biblical Sexuality and Transformation, Restoring Relationships, Boundaries, Effective Communication, and Responding with Grace and Truth*. This is an incredibly dynamic series that features testimonies from parents, teachings from PF staff and leaders, and includes printable PDF worksheets for individual or group processing.

Already, we've heard about numerous difficult situations that participants are working through:

- Parents whose son came out as gay in college, and still gets angry with them over their Christian beliefs about sexuality.
- A grandmother whose granddaughter announced she is transgender, right before Thanksgiving.

"He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and freedom to prisoners."

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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- Parents unsure of how to relate to their daughter, who said she used to be a lesbian, but is now polyamorous/bisexual.
- A single mother with three different kids embracing LGBTQ identities, and none will speak to her.

Even though I'm not personally married, nor do I have children, I can feel the weight and burden these families carry for their loved ones, and their strained relationships.

Yet, in these Hope Group Zoom meetings, something beautiful happens: we see Scripture coming alive right before our eyes (or rather, our screens). Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." As these friends and family come together, there is a powerful, sacred experience in sharing and bearing one another's burdens. This is especially true for those who are isolated geographically, or for health reasons in this season—it is so encouraging to hear other people's stories, and know that you're not alone.

James 5:16 says, "...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective." As parents are vulnerable in the Hope Group Zoom program, this opens the door to confessing their failings and mistakes in how they relate to their loved ones, and asking for advice. Indeed, none of us are perfect in how we relate to those we disagree with. Finally, we're seeing the power of prayer, as we lift up these painful situations to the Lord and ask Him to work out His good will and plan for our loved ones' lives.

As we continue to see the rise of people embracing LGBTQ desires and identity, we see a corresponding rise in loved ones seeking out how to respond biblically. We are grateful the Lord has enabled us to offer the Hope Group Zoom program to help meet the need for godly support and counsel for these families. If you or someone you know would find this group helpful, we invite you to sign into your account at www.portlandfellowship.com, click on "Join A Program", and select "Zoom Hope Group Program".

Thank you for standing alongside us in this difficult, yet crucial, ministry. We are eternally grateful for your prayers, encouragement and support.

In Christ,
Patrick Silvis
Program Manager

Ministry Highlight: Path of Life



One of the ways we are able to offer Hope Group Zoom is through the partnership of our dear friends at Path of Life in Spokane, WA. Path of Life is a ministry that offers Christ-centered hope and resources for sexual health and relational wholeness. They provide compassionate and hopeful mentoring, support and education for pregnancy, post abortion, unwanted same-sex attraction and gender identity issues.

Path of Life's Director, Sheri Olsen, is partnering with PF Director Jason Thompson to help facilitate the monthly Zoom calls, and we've truly enjoyed getting to know some of the family and friends from Spokane who are joining us on Zoom.

To learn more about Path of Life, please visit: www.pathoflifespokane.org

Portland Fellowship is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 nondenominational organization. We are exclusively supported through private donations, support services and offerings. Thank you for your gifts.

events calendar

february 11

In-Person Hope Group

For friends and family of gay or trans-identified loved ones. 6:30 pm.
www.portlandfellowship.com/rsvp.php

february 3 & 17

Zoom Hope Group Program

www.portlandfellowship.com/friends_family.php

february 18-19

KathyGrace Speaking

Dallas Theological Seminary, TX.

february 20

Patrick Speaking

Zoom training for youth leaders in Erie, PA.

tuesdays in february

Taking Back Ground

PF's discipleship program for unwanted SSA. 7-9:30 pm.

Speakers and personal support can be arranged through the office.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com