

## St. Peter's Book Discussion

### Everything Happens For A Reason *And Other Lies I've Loved*

#### January 9, 2023 6:00-7:00 *Preface, Chapters 1 & 2*

---

1. What facts are we given about the author? Do they help you identify in any way?
2. The title of the book plays on a common phrase of comfort that people offer to those in need. Do you know any popular phrases used or used to respond to a friend going through a hard time?
3. Why? God, are you there? What does this suffering mean?  
Do the 3 questions that launch the book resonate with you? Is there a time when you've asked similar ones?
4. Think about a time when you experienced a difficult situation (illness, divorce, death in the family, job loss). What do you wish your friends and family had said to you. What do you wish they would have done for you?
5. Share insights, questions or observations.

#### January 16<sup>th</sup> Chapters 3, 4 and 5

---

1. What do you believe the role of prayer to be for those who are suffering? For those who offer prayers for the suffering?
2. Can you tell a story of "answered prayer?" Can you tell a story of a prayer that went "unanswered?" What do we learn from that experience?
3. What accounts for the differences between the way congregants of a prosperity gospel and Mennonite church react to Bowler's diagnosis and illness?
4. Discuss the nature of grief in the book and in your own experience. What are your go-to ways to process (or avoid) in your own experience.
5. How does Kate make sense of a seemingly paradoxical reality? What do you think Kate is speaking about when she writes about "surrender?" Surrender what? To whom? For what purpose?

#### January 23 Chapters 6, 7 and 8

---

1. How do you feel about the issue of money (cost of medical treatment) and the chances to live?

2. Kate writes an op-ed for the New York Times and receives hundreds of letters from readers expressing their own fears, grief, theories and advice. Why do you think these readers were compelled to write to her, a stranger?
3. What is the relationship between Kate and her father In Chapter 7?  
When the family attends Palm Sunday service what thoughts does Kate have? Have you shared any of the same observations during church? What is your reaction/thoughts?
4. Kate has a friend, Ray, who is a pediatric oncologist. What feels different about him and how he handles talking to her parents? Why does Kate open up to him?
5. Share insights, questions or observations.

### January 30<sup>th</sup> Chapter 9, appendix 1&2

---

1. "Don't skip to the end," says Frank.  
What's one thing you can do today to keep you from skipping to the end- the end of the day, end of the summer, end of the toddler years and end of whatever tends to loom largest in front of you?
2. "Ordinary Time" each day. What do you want to leave?
3. What beauty and harm do you find when you reflect too much on the past? Too much on the present? Too much on the future?
4. Comments on Appendix #1 and #2.
5. Sharing any insights, questions or observations from the book.