

Has your group been reading through *Different Together*? It might not be an easy journey to take, but one that can bring encouragement to the mothers around you. Your group is a safe place for women to share their parenting challenges in a way they've never been able to share before.

### **Chapter 9: A Place to Belong**

On page 133, Nathan shares, "But no matter where I went or what I did, I always knew that as soon as I opened my front door I would be welcomed home. My family had created a place where I was not only allowed but encouraged to be Nathan, the person God made me to be. I was not asked to put on a safer, more acceptable personality. I was not asked to be someone I was not. I was simply allowed to be who I was – as I learned to accept and love the ones around me for who they were. Home was truly a safe place put together by my parents and brought to life by my family, who all knew me so well and actually loved me for it."

What is challenging for you in providing a safe home for your children where they can be themselves?

Page 135, "The belief that God is good and that He loves us is our foundation to stand on in times of deep heart and soul testing. But faith does not take away the pain and anguish; it does not diminish the unforgettable years of heartbreak and despair."

What life circumstances and Bible verses remind you that God is good?

Sally states on page 149, "As long as we believe we can control life by trying, controlling, manipulating, putting pressure on life, we will live in constant exhaustion."

What habits do you have or desire to cultivate that remind you that God is in control and not you?

On pages 142 and 143, Sally discusses taking breaks and cultivating friendships as ways to take care of ourselves during the marathon journey of mothering. How can you incorporate small bits of regular self-care into your life?

### **Chapter 10: Voices of Darkness, Voices of Truth**

Page 155, "The amazing thing about having a loving Creator who freely offers grace, forgiveness, and redemption is that no matter how loud the voices of darkness scream, the Voice of light will always be louder. But not if we don't choose it. Yes, who we listen to is a choice- maybe not always a conscious one, but a choice all the same."

What voices are you tempted to listen to? Your own? Culture? Blogs? The internet? Satan? How will you take action to listen to God's voice?

Page 158, "I made a deliberate choice to put aside many of my own needs and time commitments during the time in order to involve all our kids deeply in this ministry of hospitality."

Parenting will involve continual sacrifices of our time and needs. What have you chosen to lay down for this season in order to be fully available? (This does not mean neglecting your own self-care that keeps you healthy.)

On page 160, Sally discusses teenagers and the need to allow them the freedom to make choices. For those of you with pre-teen and teenage children, how are you loosening the reins of control in favor of nudging and influencing?

Take some time to pray through the issues and things that the women want to change in their daily lives.