

Community Group Leader's Guide

For the week of August 26, 2018

REMINDERS

- *Drinks available*
- *Contact person responsible for this week's snack/dessert*
- *Have name tags prepared if necessary so all will feel comfortable*
- *Pray for the building of relationships and spiritual growth of the group*
- *Lesson: Pray Faithfully; Everyone participates; brief, one topic at a time; pray as many times as you want, encourage each member to sign up for www.prayforeveryhome.com.*

MY STORY

The My Story questions are designed to be low risk, casual get-to-know-you type questions of your members present and past journey; their likes/dislikes, hopes, dreams, fears, where am I at right now with God, etc.

1. How would you describe prayer in your household growing up?

2. When it comes to prayer in your own life do you? ...

- Prefer to pray silently instead of out loud
- Find your mind wandering when trying to pray
- Rarely think about praying
- Look forward to prayer time as a group
- Feel awkward about praying out loud
- Don't really know how to pray out loud
- Other

3. Looking back over your sermon notes, was there a particular point or passage of Scripture that challenged, confused or caught your attention?

DIGGING DEEPER

These questions are designed to be informative or opinions on the topic. There will be various point-of-view, interpretations of situations, what the individual thought, found in the Scripture, issue, or topic. Be sure to respond encouragingly to each person, affirming them with positive feedback when appropriate.

1. Prayer isn't supposed to be complicated or intimidating. How do the following verses reinforce that prayer is simple and vital to our spiritual growth?

The Romans passage reminds us that when we are weak, and do not know exactly how we should pray, God Himself (through the Holy Spirit) helps by making intercession for us. The idea is simply communicating beyond our ability to express as the Lord searches the hearts of those whom He helps, and He is able to guide our prayers according to the will of God.

Matthew 6:7

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. [NIV]

Romans 8:26-27

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. [27] And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. [NIV]

James 5:13-16

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. [14] Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. [15] And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. [16] Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. [NIV]

What do these verses tell us about how God relates to us?

Which of these verses is most helpful with your motivation to pray?

2. In any relationship, the quality of communication is directly related to the quality and depth of the relationship. It's no different in a relationship with God. In the challenge we have been called by our church to "Bless Every Home" with the primary purpose of praying, caring, and sharing our Savior with our neighbors. What guidelines or tips do you see in the following passage that could influence our effectiveness in praying and blessing those that live near you?

Encourage members to circle or underline portions of the passage that stand out to them.

1 Peter 2:12

12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (NIV)

Proverbs 29:7

7 The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.(NIV)

James 1:27

27 Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.(NIV)

Micah 6:6-8

6 With what shall I come before the Lord and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? 8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.(NIV)

Matthew 9:35-38

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” [NIV]

How do you find yourself normally responding to people who are “like sheep without a shepherd?”

3. Many of us have a “solo sport” type of faith and prayer habit where we don’t include anyone else in our own spiritual matters. What purposes do we see in the following verses for including other people in our faith and prayer life?

This is one of the foundations of having a Community Group. Praying for and with one another strengthens us in faith, worship, and friendship as a result of being witness to how God responds to your prayers. When we pray faithfully for one another we have a unique opportunity of moving from the sidelines of the need to being in the game itself. This may be a new idea for some members in your group, especially if they are new in their faith.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. [NIV]

James 5:16

TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Read aloud this portion of the lesson before prayer request time so that the guideline is clear. Watch timing to be sure to end at an appropriate time so that there can be a short time of fellowship before dismissal. Make a list of the requests and make note in online attendance of anything the staff may need to be aware of.

Prayer is an important part of being in a Community Group. Group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines:

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused, and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.

PRAYER REQUESTS