



## LEADER'S TOOLBOX

### Praying Together as a Group



#### Group Meeting Resource

*As the leader you set an example of fervent, faith-filled prayer. You, however, do NOT do all the praying. Plan simple activities that facilitate people learning to pray as a group. Always take into consideration that not everyone is comfortable praying out-loud in a group setting; therefore, always make doing so optional.*

#### Models of Prayer

Use the ACTS model. Either cover all four aspects or emphasize one per meeting. Pick Scriptures and songs that reflect each.

- Adoration (say or sing worship to God)
- Confession (acknowledge and repent publicly or privately of sins)
- Thanksgiving (thank him for blessing and the gift of Himself)
- Supplication (make earnest requests of God)

Pray Scripture. The leader prays the first one to show how. For example:

1 Thessalonians 3:13—May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

**“Dear Lord, please strengthen my heart-level determination to do what is right. Give me your grace to make decisions that lead to holiness. Jesus, I look forward to your return....”** etc.

Choose a Scripture for the group to use to pray for different needs:

- For those yet to believe (Isaiah 55:6-8; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Ephesians 5:14-18; Psalm 107 - pray for the different types of people described)
- For believers (Ephesians 1:17-19; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)
- For revival use Isaiah's cry for revival (Isaiah 64:1-5)
- For spiritual power use the apostles' prayer for power (Acts 4:29-31)

**Model how to pray “conversationally” in a group. Imagine the group sitting at the table talking with Jesus about a concern.** Rather than one person telling Jesus every part of the need while everyone else is left out of the conversation, several people can each tell Jesus different aspects of the need. For example:

- Jim's dad has had a serious accident. Some of the nurses are not caring for him leg properly, the doctor seems inattentive, the company is threatening to withhold finances, etc. A different person prays for each aspect of the situation. In addition, listen to what else God might want prayed: healing, peace and clear-headedness, reliance on God. Each person limit him/herself to praying for just one aspect of the need. Then, you are working together as a team.
- When all aspects are covered, move to the next need.

#### Creative Expressions of Prayer

- Have group members pray a sentence of gratitude to God for how He has been revealing Himself recently.
- Prayer walk around your house, neighborhood or church property. Pray for neighbors to find Christ. Pray for other groups/ministries. Ask God to show you what He is wanting to do in each arena. Then, pray it.
- Sing a hymn or praise song together a-capella as a group.



- Keep a prayer journal for the group. Record requests and answers. Pray, review, and report back each week.
- Adopt a local, national or international mission partner for your group to pray for. Contact Global Outreach department for specific items to pray for.
- **Share with your group an overview of God's names, and then have each person pray prayers of adoration noting which 'name of God' means most right now in their lives.**
- After taking prayer requests, group the requests into categories and have one person pray over that category (e.g., illness, finances, relational difficulties, ministry opportunities)
- Take one church staff member/leader each week and pray for them and their ministry.
- For each answered prayer place a rock in a glass jar. As it fills up over time, it serves as a visual reminder of God's power and faithfulness.
- Do communion as a group, but before taking the elements, spend some time in silent and/or confessing prayer as group members examine themselves. \* See **Celebrating Communion supplement**.
- Divide the Lord's Prayer (Matt. 6:9-13) into portions to focus on different ways to pray, then personalize it.
- Using a reliable book on prayer as your guide, pull out sections to read and then put into practice what you learn. Suggested books:
  - **Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home** by Richard Foster
  - **Prayer** by E.M. Bounds
  - **The Power of a Praying Life** by Stormie Omartian
  - **Together in Prayer** by Andrew Wheeler
  - **Prayer: The Great Adventure** by David Jeremiah
- Put newsprint on the walls and give people colored markers. Ask them to write prayers for 30-60 minutes. Ideas: ways you want God to move in your group, church, family, or work; those yet to believe; deeper surrender to Christ.
- **Have group members write on an index card an area in their life where they are in need of God's forgiveness.** Collect the cards in a box, pray over them as leader, and then discard the box (garbage can, burning in the grill). You might even consider using water-soluble paper, and placing the paper in water.
- Give participants several minutes to silently pray asking God what is on His heart that He wants the group to pray for. Come back together and write on a dry erase board or newsprint what God impressed on them. Split up the prayers among the group members and take turns praying them.
- With worship music in the background, have group members write down their prayers (journal) about where they are sensing God is wanting to have greater authority in their lives, relationships, ministry, etc. Allow times of silence to soak in God's presence.



### Group Meeting Resource

Many have expressed a desire to celebrate communion more frequently than the few times we corporately share in it. We believe that the context of a Community Group is a great place for this to happen. The following is meant to give you some guidelines to make this a meaningful celebration within your group. Not all denominations/faith traditions practice communion in this manner though, so it is important to talk through this ahead of time with your group, so everyone has clear understanding and agreement. Please feel free to contact church leadership with questions.

#### **What is communion?** (The Lord's Supper or Eucharist)

It is the regular remembrance and celebration of the Lord's sacrificial death. The breaking and eating of bread has to do with Christ's body being broken on the cross. The drinking from the cup has to do with the shedding of Christ's blood whereby we are forgiven (Matthew 26:26-28; 1 Corinthians 11:23-24).

#### **What is the purpose of communion?**

The primary purpose of communion is to take time to remember all that the Lord did for us. It is a time to worship and give thanks for the forgiveness of our sins and the new life and relationship that we have in Jesus Christ. This time of remembrance was initiated by Jesus just before His death. Because we tend to be forgetful people, in the Old Testament believers were called to remember the faithfulness of God through various memorials. In the New Testament, this is the way that Jesus wanted us to remember His love and forgiveness of our sins.

*For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

These verses also explain that communion is a time of personal examination. It is a time to examine our relationship with the Lord and others.

*Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we judged ourselves, we would not come under judgment. When we are judged by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be condemned with the world. 1 Corinthians 11:27-32*

#### **Where and how often should we celebrate it?**

We believe that it is a good thing for believers to celebrate not only "at church" or in the "church building" but also in homes and appropriate places all around the city. We can celebrate regularly and often. God invites us to celebrate as often as we feel is appropriate.

In **Acts 2:42-47**, we read that believers met on a regular basis in their homes to celebrate communion.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*



**Who can take communion and who can serve communion?**

Any person who has believed on or trusted the Lord Jesus Christ alone for his or her salvation. This means it is possible that some members of your group may not want to participate.

Biblically speaking, anyone can serve or facilitate communion. Strategically, we think that the community group leader or apprentice would be the one to serve. It is a great opportunity to demonstrate servant leadership in the same way that Jesus served his disciples. However, there may be other members who are equally able to lead and serve in this celebration. It is at the leader's discernment and discretion.

**Is there a "best" time to serve communion in the life cycle of the group?**

It is important to get to know one another fairly well, first, so it's generally recommended that you wait at least 6 months after the group starts.

**How can we serve communion?**

There are many ways to serve communion. The Bible does not dictate a certain method. Feel free to be creative. You could celebrate communion after a meal together as often modeled by the early church (Matt. 26:26-29; Acts 2:42-46; 1 Cor. 11:20-26). You could make this the centerpiece of your time together or you could partake in it before or after you complete a study and discussion time. The important thing to remember is that this is a time of worship. This is a time of celebration. This is a time of remembrance and reflection. Enjoy it and you will see you and your group members grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Here are a couple of ideas to get you started:

1. Use a loaf of unsliced bread and some grape juice. Place the bread on a platter and the juice in a nice cup.
2. Create a beautiful, worshipful environment with perhaps music and candles.
3. As you begin your time of celebration, read some selected passages of Scripture that remind us of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection:  
Psalm 22; Isaiah 53; Mark 15:21-29; John 19; 1 Cor. 15:1-8; Gal. 2:16-21; Eph. 2:1-10; Phil. 2:1-11
4. After a time of reading, pass the bread around and ask each member to tear off a small piece that represents the body of Jesus Christ that was broken for us.
5. Then read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.
6. Then pass the cup of juice around and have everyone dip their bread into the cup. (Or, you may prefer that everyone have their own, small cup of juice.)
7. Encourage each member to spend some quiet minutes in prayer and reflection after the bread and juice have been taken.
8. After all members have been served, close with voluntary prayer and praise.

Another option would be to have the bread and cup placed on a table in the middle of your group. After a time of sharing, reading, and prayer, people serve themselves by going to the table, tearing off a piece of bread, and dipping it in the juice. You may also consider having group members serve one another. Again, feel free to be creative as you celebrate this time together.