

Sunday's Theme – Mark 7 – “The Heart of the Matter”

All these components should be present at a normal cell meeting. Some nights you may not get to everything, but each of these should be present at least 75% of the time (e.g. once/month you might not get to the Vision time and so on). The components do not need to be in this order necessarily, except that generally you ought to begin with a welcoming time, and end with a vision time (close the meeting with an *outward focus*).

Please note the time constraints for each part of the meeting!

WELCOME (10 minutes):

The purpose of this time is to “bring people in.” You may use an icebreaker, but if you do make sure that it is one that can be completed by everyone in 10 minutes (i.e. each person takes only about a minute to answer). Occasionally, during this time, someone will share a deep need/hurt. If so, feel free to minister to them in prayer etc.

Ice Breaker Question: What was the food your parents could never get you to eat as a kid?

WORSHIP (15 minutes):

Normally choose 2-3 songs. It's also good to start by reading a short Scripture passage. You may also want to allow time for simple prayers of praise from the group. Optionally, you may also want to incorporate Communion as part of your worship time.

Scripture idea to use:

- Psalm 63:1-5

Song ideas to use:

1. All Who Are Thirsty (#33)
2. Better Is One Day (#36)

WORD (20 minutes):

The purpose of this time is not for Bible *study* but instead, Bible *application*. Focus on personal application of scriptural truths. Ask people what concrete actions they should take in response to the scripture.

Read Mark 7:1-23

(Questions this week are taken directly from the Serendipity Bible)

1. What is the issue debated by the Pharisees and Jesus? Given this debate, how would each define what it means to be spiritual? How does the quote from Isaiah address the issue at hand?
2. Although the traditions were established to help people obey the law, how is it that they ended up overshadowing that law (vv. 8-9)?

3. Something declared “Corban” meant it was dedicated to God, thus it was no longer able to be given away. What does this illustration show about how traditions twisted the law?
4. How does Jesus’ idea of being unclean differ from that of the Pharisees? Why doesn’t Jesus offer any solutions to the problem at this time?
5. What in your religious life is comparable to the “tradition of the elders” (i.e., rules or regulations not from Scripture but from your tradition and culture)? How could these rules actually block someone from God? How might they mask evil in a “religious” disguise?
6. How would you decide whether someone was really “spiritual” or not? How has your view of spirituality changed over the past few years? Why?
7. Verses 20-23 represent an evil heart, whereas 12:30 represents a pure, whole heart. How can you strengthen that second kind of heart? What do you do when the evil heart wins out?

PRAYER (15 minutes):

Prayer ministry may be incorporated at any time during the meeting. If a lot of prayer ministry took place during the worship time, or as a result of things shared during the word time, don’t feel as though you have to have another separate time for prayer. However, if there hasn’t been time for prayer elsewhere, please do not short-change this part of the meeting.

In addition to praying for any needs shared in the group, also pray for one another that you would each be immersed with a deep sense of God’s cleansing power of every part of your life – past, present and future. Pray that the gospel would go deeper!

VISION (5 minutes):

This can be incorporated into a closing prayer time, and should be focused on the vision of the cell: to reach people who don’t know Jesus. It may include sharing about those you are praying for, and encouragement in praying for and speaking to those who are not Christians.

Close the gathering by focusing outward. Encourage your group members to be on the lookout for visitors at church and to take steps to get to know them in order to eventually invite them to your cell group.

CLOSING & ANNOUNCEMENTS (5 minutes)