



## NEWS &amp; ANNOUNCEMENTS

## THIS WEEK:

## ⇒ PREPARATION FOR THIS WEEK:

- Do the homework and choose questions best suited to your group:
  - Consider reaching out to the group (using the church center app!) for feedback on which questions to use. Encourage members to download the app too! [Find the CHURCH CENTER app in your Apple or Android App stores!]
  - Remember that it is never the goal to get through all of the questions – but to build relationships with all of your members and to get a chance to hear from each of them through out the gathering.
- Listen to the [Audio Guide/Podcast](#) for more discussion suggestions.

## LEADER ANNOUNCEMENTS:

## ⇒ PICTURES!

- Remember that as you meet, SERVE, and socialize that we have our #hashtag challenge happening again this semester – and this time we will award the prize! Post pictures to FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM with #gatewaylifegroups in your comments!
- Be sure to follow both GATEWAY COMMUNITY CRC on both platforms!

## ⇒ LIFE GROUP COVENANT:

- By now you should have all the signatures on your Life Group covenant. If you haven't yet, take a moment at your next meeting to get the rest.
- Also, take a moment to remind your group of what they have signed!

## ⇒ LIFE GROUP SERVE PROJECT

- Have you scheduled your SERVE project with Pastor Marcel yet? [Deadline was October 1!] If you haven't yet, please do so this week!

## LEADER INFORMATION:

## ⇒ WEEKLY LEADER TRAINING:

1. MOST IMPORTANT JOB AS A LIFE GROUP LEADER – PRAYER
2. LIFE GROUP TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

## ⇒ ATTENDANCE:

- Submit your group's attendance online or in the Church Center App, or at: <https://gatewaycrc.churchcenter.com/groups/life-groups>. Be sure to **submit your attendance right away after your meeting.**

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

**LEADER NOTE:** Now that your group has met a number of times, this week, select just one of these two question to get your group comfortable for your meeting. These questions are great tools to get everyone in your meeting talking together. If you have someone who remains silent through the discussion say something like, *"Hey Sally, I wonder what your earliest memory might be?"*

## 1) What is your earliest memory of being a part of your family?

**LEADER NOTE:** This can be a question where you can go around the room and invite everyone to respond, but it does require some amount of thought. Allow for some space, and invite someone (other than a leader) to start!

## 2) Have you had any interaction with a stranger that left you feeling like only God could have arranged that conversation?

**LEADER NOTE:** This one may not work to have go around the room, but leave it open to your group to answer as they can. If you have members who remain quiet, change up the question:

## RESTATED QUESTION:

- Have you heard of a story like this that someone else has shared?

## QUICK REVIEW

**LEADER NOTE:** These are two questions that have your group reflecting back upon last Sunday's message.

## 1) Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?

**LEADER NOTE:** Be sure that you're leading by example, refer to your own notes and thoughts that you have collected. Help your members see the value in taking notes!

2) This past week Pastor Justin had us read through the "One Another" commands of scripture, asking *"Do I have a system of mutual love and accountability with fellow Christians that model these one-another's of scripture?"* Where do you think you are at in this?

**LEADER NOTE:** There are three pages in this week's sermon and Life Group guide at the end. Be sure to have a read through of those verses yourselves, and be prepared to share your own answer.

## GOD'S STORY - TRIADS

**LEADER NOTE:** This are three question that we ask each week, and have us look at each passage we study through the same lens.

**READ Ephesians 2:11-22**

1) **GOD** - What does this passage say about the character of God?

2) **THE WORLD** - What does this passage say about fallen humanity?

3) **ME** - Where does this passage specifically expose sin or unbelief in my own life? How does it specifically call me to change my thinking, redirect my affections, replace my behaviors, and trust my Savior?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1) **READ Ephesians 2:12**. Can you imagine for a moment what life would look like if you found yourself "*separated from Christ*"? How would you describe what that would feel like??

**LEADERS NOTE:** Encourage your members to put themselves in the sandals of the Gentiles who yearned to enter the Temple, but were prohibited, and told to stay in their specific court. These individuals perhaps knew about the Faith, and wanted to experience it – but were withheld from it.

### ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- What are some current parallel stories to this?
- Where else in history have we seen the same line drawn between people with faith and those without?

**DISCUSSION TIP:** This discussion is not meant to end up in the area of what happens after death for someone who has not accepted Jesus – where we see Hell as a place for those who are eternally separated from God. Try to keep the discussion centered on what life would look like on earth in this separation, like the Gentiles experienced.

- Imagine you came to our church as a complete stranger, what kind of experience do you think you would have??

**LEADER NOTE:** While we cannot be meeting in person, and with the registration process for attending in person worship may limit who will come to church, dig back into your memory banks and visualize a "regular" service.

**DISCUSSION TIP:** As mentioned before, be careful with where this discussion goes, as it can easily go down a judgemental road. Instead, invite your group to wonder about how, when we get back to 'normal' church service patterns, that we can be a part of the solution!

- **READ Matthew 25:35; Hebrews 13:2**. What is our collective opportunity in the particular times that we find ourselves in?

**LEADER NOTE:** We believe that the Lord will use our church community to build His Kingdom here on earth, with that Kingdom in mind, try to encourage your members to go beyond the simple answers of "feed & clothe the poor."

### ADDITIONAL QUESTION:

- Have you ever experienced something what the author of Hebrews refers to as "entertaining angels"?

2) **READ Ephesians 2:15-16**. Paul's desire is that we find peace with each other, and with the Lord—does one relationship impact the other? How so?

**LEADER NOTE:** In 2:14-17 Paul uses the word "ONE" four times, and the word "PEACE" also four times. Clearly his desire is that a sense of unity is at the core of who we are – both with the Lord (i.e. "*reconcile us both to God*"), and with each other (i.e. "*one new humanity*").

### RESTATED QUESTIONS:

- Does our relationship with the Lord affect our relationships with each other?
- Do our relationships with each other affect our relationship with the Lord?

- [READ 1 John 2:9-11](#). We see here that one relationship does drastically impact the other. How does John in these verses challenge us to alter our behaviors?

**LEADER NOTE:** Here we see again the reality of our sin, and that our sin leads us to places where the Lord is not. However, we also see an example that if we do in fact live in a loving-our-neighbor way, that we will be able to experience what life in the light actually is like!

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION:**

- How does living in the light prevent you from stumbling?

3) [READ Ephesians 2:22; Philippians 2:1-4](#). Unity amongst believers is needed for the body of the church to be a healthy community. What kinds of actions hinder that quest for unity amongst us? Where do you need to grow? Where does our church need to grow??

**DISCUSSION TIP:** In these kinds of questions where there are multiple questions within the question – tackle them one at a time. As conversation wraps up with the first, lead into the next part of the question.

**LEADER NOTE:** For more insight, re-introduce the list of ‘One Another’ verses that are provided in the Sermon Guide.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION:**

- What prevents us from being able to be all these things?
- What did we learn in last week’s conversation around depravity that will help guide us in pursuing these commands?

- [READ James 4:4-6](#). Where might sins like pride and arrogance cause us to fall?

**LEADER NOTE:** Consider the line in verse six where James quotes Proverbs 3:34 “*God opposes the proud.*” Pride and arrogance are deeply linked, especially as we think about how the Jews treated the Gentiles, and perhaps about how our actions have looked similarly to the Jews as we hold our church traditions and patterns closely to ourselves.

**ADDITIONAL QUESTION:**

- What actions have we done that push people away from our faith?

## TAKING IT HOME

Look up the [Heidelberg Catechism Q&A 55](#). How is the call to live in unity emphasized here? ([www.heidelberg-catechism.com](http://www.heidelberg-catechism.com)— search for 55)

**LEADER NOTE:** For your easy reference – here’s the Q&A:

55. Q. What do you understand by the communion of saints?
- A. First,  
that believers, all and everyone, as members of Christ have communion with him and share in all his treasures and gifts. <sup>1</sup>
- Second,  
that everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members. <sup>2</sup>

1. Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 6:17; 12:4-7, 12, 13; 1 Jn 1:3.

2. Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:20-27; 13:1-7; Phil 2:4-8.

**CLOSING YOUR MEETING:** Before you close in prayer consider asking this very final question, to see where your members are at:

**CLOSING QUESTION:**

- What did we all learn in this study? What are the key points that we are heading home with?

## ADDITIONAL SELF STUDY *(Optional Personal Reflection Questions)*

**LEADER NOTE:** As you know, these questions are completely optional for participants' personal reflection.

1) **READ John 17.** Take some time to reflect upon Jesus' heart for His future church as they (i.e. us!) seek to follow His ways. What strikes you about Jesus' prayer? How have you seen His prayer answered? What parts of the prayer still need to be answered? How can you contribute to being a part of the answer?

2) **READ Colossians 3:5-11.** Here again we see Paul writing about our past tense nature of being spiritually "dead," i.e. "you once walked," while also indicating that there is a process of renewal to experience. In which areas do you need to seek continued renewal and restoration? Then **READ Colossians 3:12-17.** The first words there indicate that is an action that we need to do. Which action is it for you?

## GROUP ANNOUNCEMENTS

**PICTURES:** We are looking for pictures – from your meetings, upcoming serve projects, or socials! We want to put together a highlight video to be shown to our church after this Life Group semester wraps up. Please email them directly to pastor Adam – [adam@gatewaycrc.org](mailto:adam@gatewaycrc.org).

**HASHTAG CHALLENGE:** Be sure to encourage your group to use the #GatewayLifeGroups hashtag on Facebook and Instagram. Remember that there is going to be a \$300 gift card draw at the end of the semester. [One COVID tip – try to inspire the public sharing of photos that follow covid-19 protocols. Optics & perception play a role]

## "FROM FOREIGNERS TO FAMILY"

### "FROM FOREIGNERS TO FAMILY"

#### WHO WE WERE

- DEAD TO SIN & SEPARATED FROM GOD

Acts 22:22

#### WHO WE ARE

1. WE ARE ONE SPIRITUAL FAMILY.

2. GOD DESIRES ME TO BE A MEMBER OF HIS FAMILY.

3. A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT A CHURCH FAMILY IS AN ORPHAN.

Hebrews 3:13, Romans 12: 10, Romans 15: 4, Galatians 6: 2

4. THE CHURCH IS ON MISSION.





# MOST IMPORTANT JOB AS A LIFE GROUP LEADER - PRAYER

Fall 2020 Semester | WEEK #3

Jim Egli, the small groups pastor at a Vineyard church in Illinois, had a question: What's the most important part of leading a small group?

To answer that question, he completed a Ph.D. degree and did extensive statistical research involving over 3,000 small group leaders in more than 200 churches. Obviously, he really wanted to know.

So, what did he find?

He found that the single most important dimension of leading a group is your prayer life –your connection to God as a leader.

Egli and his research partner investigated all sorts of aspects of small groups, asking their respondents questions about group dynamics, leadership behaviors, and group meetings. But they found that the health and growth of a group are tied most closely to the unseen dimension of a group leader's relationship with God.

The biggest results came from leaders' answers to these questions:

- How consistently do you take time for prayer and Bible reading?
- Are you praying daily for your non-Christian friends to come to know Jesus?
- How many days in the past week did you pray for your small group members?
- Do you pray for your group meetings in the days leading up to it?
- How much time on average do you spend in daily prayer and Bible reading?

Those leaders with a strong relationship with God –as indicated by their answers to these questions –led small groups which experienced a deeper level of care between members and had a clearer sense of mission beyond the group. They also raised up more leaders and generated more new groups. And the greatest difference was in evangelistic impact -- such leaders' groups were four times likelier to see people brought to Christ through the influence of the group than groups led by leaders with a weaker prayer life.

You may think you may need to spend more time preparing for your small group discussion or touching base with your members outside group or organizing social activities or service projects. And that may be true.

But don't neglect your prayer life. Your relationship with God will have more impact on your group than anything else you do.

To learn more, check out:

<http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2010/small-group-leaders-most-important-job.html?paging=off>

Some Things to Consider:

- What are your answers to the five questions above?
- What has been your biggest impediment to spending time with God on a consistent basis? How could you (or how have you) overcome it?
- What are one or two practical things you can start doing to improve your prayer life?
- What advice would you give to a new Christian who is just beginning to develop a prayer life?



## LIFE GROUP TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Fall 2020 Semester | WEEK #3

Prayer is an important part of being in a Life Group, but it can also be intimidating. We find that group prayer goes better when we follow four simple guidelines:

**ALWAYS TAKE THE TIME TO PRAY TOGETHER:** It is vital to the health of your group and to spiritual growth

**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 prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves 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 prayer for topics they feel most led to pray about.

**NO ONE IS REQUIRED TO PRAY:** There is no expectation that you personally pray out loud in groups if you'd rather not.

**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 members to stay focused and it tends to intimidate those who may just be learning to pray out loud in a group setting. Remember, no one is required to pray.

**CONSIDER A FEW DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES:** If you find that praying in a group of 12-15 is too large, consider some of the techniques we discussed in training -in the same way you could have two or three separate groups talking about questions and then coming together, you can utilize the same tool in prayer. Pray in groups of 4-5 and then bring it together. Also, consider praying as groups of men and women. You'd be surprised at how different the prayers are when you do that. It might even inspire a little more honesty.

**KEEP IT 'PERSONAL':** As much as possible, encourage members to pray for more immediate concerns. Things like 'poverty in Africa' is no laughing matter, but consider prayers that apply more directly to your group. Again, this will help fulfill our mission of 'cultivating meaningful relationships' even as we lift up one another in prayer. Another benefit is that it will also help against 'gossip prayers.'