

Week 3: Fellowship

FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

How To Prepare For Leading Your Group: ¹

- Dedicate some time before leading to pray for your group and arrange the discussion questions in a way that suits their needs and the time given to meet.
- Review the Bible verses and "Big Idea" of the message to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week's message.
- Use the discussion questions as a template. **You do not need to use all the questions given.** Ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion in a way that honours God, engages the group and helps your group apply the Bible passage and the speakers "big idea" to their life.
- You are not the answer. Your responsibility is to facilitate the discussion and keep it on track. The questions are meant to spark conversation as your group interacts with the content of the message. Encourage interaction with the content as opposed to "answers" to the questions. It is ok to disagree and have different views in a way that honours God and values your group members' **own journey with God.**

How To Use The Discussion Questions:

- Start your groups discussion with the "Check-in" question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week's message. It is ok if no one remembers the last week or applied the content. The weekly reminder for feedback may lead to application becoming a habit.
- Read this week's scripture passages **together** (ask for volunteers) and guide your group through the "discuss" questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week's message/passage.
- Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in the "apply" section. Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the **needs and dynamics** of your group, moving from ideas about the message to the application of the message to your members life / current circumstances.
- Connect with God together as a group through prayer. This can be in the form of **prayer requests or prayer practices.**
- If you routinely do not have enough time to pray together, **try starting your meeting with the prayer section.** Many leaders have found that giving the group a cut off time to end the discussion (set a timer) and transition to prayer is very effective for time management (usually the last half hour of the meeting).
- Prayer is so key to the application of the passage and transitioning the message from the head to the heart. An open honest time of prayer will help members in your group feel cared for and more involved.
- Commitment to a time of prayer together as a group is key to a healthy group experience, spiritual growth, and the application of Scripture.

¹ For more resources on care and prayer, check out the Slack channels.

THE BRIDGE

On Purpose

LIVING WITH INTENTION

<p>CHECK-IN</p>	<p>In what way did your actions this past week look a little more like Jesus's actions?</p>
<p>BIG IDEA</p>	<p>The church community is a grouping of persons whom God has called together, whom God will keep together, and who will survive by God's grace. Fellowship is the love we experience in God's family.</p>
<p>DISCUSS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Ephesians 2:19. Making a choice is the first step to belonging to a fellowship. What signs do you look for in yourself to demonstrate that a choice has been made? 2. Read Acts 2:44. When it comes to sharing, what is easiest for you to share - experiences, home (hospitality), or problems? Why? 3. Read Ephesians 4:16. In order to help the church body thrive, what are all the parts needed to help do this? 4. Read John 13:35. Loving one another takes sacrifice. When it comes to deciding if something is worth the sacrifice, what usually guides your decision making?
<p>APPLY How do we respond to God's teaching in meaningful ways? What might God ask of us in mind, spirit, or actions?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Think of a person(s) in your fellowship community who is currently experiencing a challenging situation. What resource could you sacrifice to let them know they are not alone and that they are loved? (ie. social, financial, time...) 2. What area of the church family can you partner up with to support growth in the body of Christ? 3. If you would like more clarification on what it means to belong to a fellowship, consider attending the upcoming Bridge membership class.

THE BRIDGE

On Purpose

LIVING WITH INTENTION

PRAYER PRACTICE (15 minutes)

Please use **ONE** of these two options to lead your group through prayer. Choose the one that fits best with your group:

1. **Palms Down, Palms Up Prayer Practice**

Step 1: Sit in a comfortable position with as little background distraction as possible. Turn off cameras and audio on Zoom. Take a few deep breaths.

Step 2: (Allow 2 minutes) Put your palms down as a symbol of letting go. Talk to God as if he was sitting across from you. Tell Him what's on your mind as if your best friend were sitting beside you. Talk about your hurts, your distractions, your cares, what happened today or what made you happy or you are looking forward to. Share whatever comes to mind.

Step 3: (2 minutes) Now turn your palms up as a symbol of surrender and receiving. Sit in silence listening to God. It is natural for your mind to wander. When it does, gently bring it back to focus on God, listening to what He has to say in response to you.

Step 4: (5 -7 minutes) Debrief with the group. Let these questions guide you:

- What was your experience during this exercise?
- What did you hear God say to you?

OR

2. **Write down prayer requests for the group.**

Either leader or another member can write.

Step 1: Begin the time of prayer by asking each member of the group to share one thing they need help with.

THE BRIDGE

On Purpose

LIVING WITH INTENTION

Step 2: Explain to the group that we will be praying for each other's prayer requests. Ask those who feel comfortable to pray for one of the requests given.

Step 3: Ask someone to pray first, then allow others to join in and pray afterwards.

Step 4: After all requests have been prayed for, the leader will allow a time of silence (approx. 1 minute), then will close the meeting by praying for any missed prayer requests and close the practice in a final prayer. (leader can use the following or do his/her own)

"Lord may we discover who we are in You. Give us ears to hear your calling. Help us Lord to be obedient to use the gifts you have given us for the benefit of others. Use us to bring change to our communities, to comfort those who need comfort and to serve those you put in our path." Amen.