

Discipleship Groups

Week 17

As your people gather, welcome them, and help them to greet one another.

When it's time to begin, welcome them as a group. Since you are the one who knows what the previous weeks' conversations have been, you are in the best position to judge what follow-up may be appropriate at the beginning of each week's session. You are the one in a position to make sure that there is a personal connection from week to week.

You may include the question that the early Methodists asked one another in their small groups: *How is it with your soul?* It is a personal sharing question. Assure your members that they are free to answer it in the way that they interpret it individually. The only wrong answer is an untrue one.

After the initial conversation and the "soul question," lead a brief follow-up discussion of this past week's prayer exercise. Our assignment was to practice thanksgiving in our praying. As you reflect on the past week, consider the following questions together:

- What was your experience of setting aside 20 minutes for confession?
- Was there an exercise this week that was especially difficult for you? Why?
- What exercise was especially helpful? Why?
- What did you learn? How did you grow?

Next, transition the group to watching this week's video together. The video can be downloaded or it can be played from the web site. Following the video, consider these questions:

- How much is supplication/asking currently a part of your prayer life?
- What did you learn from the video?
- What was new or different or helpful?
- What is or has been an impediment to asking in your experience?

Distribute to your group members copies of the next page, which offer some guidelines for this week's focus on supplication.

Close your time with a brief prayer on behalf of the whole group.

Before everyone is dismissed, remind the group members about your next meeting time and place, as well as encouraging them to pray for one another each day between now and then.

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This sheet represents a week-long exercise in supplication. As you embark on it, please keep in mind these two guidelines.

1. Don't read ahead. Focus each day on what is written and assigned for that day.
2. Give yourself ample time each day. Set aside fifteen minutes daily for these exercises. Set a timer for yourself, and find a space where you won't be distracted.

Day One

A prayer list will be helpful to you this week. If you are not already accustomed to having a list of people and circumstances for which you pray, spend some time making such a list today. You'll be able to add to it later, but invest the time to make an initial list and pray through it today.

Day Two

We naturally pray for those we love. Indeed, for people of faith, prayer is almost a reflex of love. Yet Jesus also encourages us to pray beyond the natural circle of loved ones. He teaches us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. If such people are not on the list you made yesterday, add them today, and pray for them.

Day Three

One of the encouragements in Jesus' teaching is to persevere in prayer. With that in mind, make a list of things that you had stopped praying for somewhere along the way. Return now to pray about those matters and to pray for those situations.

Day Four

Another instruction from Jesus is to pray big -- that is, to pray for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Pray through each item on your prayer list with this faith question in mind: What would God's perfect (as in heaven) will look like in this situation? Pray for that.

Day Five

Martin Luther taught, "When God says: 'thou shalt not pray,' then we may well cease." When has He told you to stop praying? In any area where He has not led you to stop, say to Him that you will -- obediently and faithfully -- keep praying for His will until you hear otherwise from Him.

Day Six

Jesus told His disciples, "Whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13 NKJV). Meditate today on what it means to pray in Jesus' name. And meditate on the truth of God answering prayers for His glory.

Day Seven

Jesus said, "If two of you agree on earth about anything that you may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 18:19 NASB). Meditate on why Jesus might have stipulated "two of you." Identify what things you want to bring to the group so that you are not praying about them alone, but rather "two of you (can) agree."

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