

Community Group Guide

LESSONS LEARNED IN INDIA

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

November 6, 2011

Various Scriptures

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

Pastor Paul shared 3 lessons that the Lord taught him during his recent mission trip to India:

- 1) Obeying the voice of Jesus comes before enjoying the victory of Jesus
- 2) Signs and wonders follow believers so that believing can follow signs and wonders
- 3) Resisting Satan here helps them resist him there

So often we become so "Americanized" in our view of Christian principles that we find ourselves getting fundamental truths backwards. We may find ourselves wanting to enjoy victory in our lives without first paying the price of obedience, or perhaps we have found ourselves chasing the exciting signs and wonders instead of realizing that they are supposed to follow us. In a church culture that is about seeing the lost come to Christ, it is important that we understand the difference.

Ultimately, we recognize that we are in a battle spiritually, but like Pastor Paul learned on the trip, we aren't in the battle alone. 1 Peter 5:8-9 shows us that we are to resist the enemy and stand firm because we are on a global team, and we began to understand from the Bible that we have a responsibility to not be the weak link in that fight. In a way that only God can do, our fight locally against our enemy has a strengthening effect on their fight against the same enemy globally.

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Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What are some of the ways that God speaks to us?
- If you had to give yourself a rating on obedience (with 1 being the worst and 10 being the best), what would your number be?
- How does it effect you to read in 1 Samuel 15:22-23 that God equates disobedience with witchcraft?
- Why do you think the call to obedience often causes us to “harden our hearts” as Hebrews 3:7 says?
- Why do you think we want signs?
- Is there a difference in needing a sign and seeking signs?
- According to Mark 16:4, an adulterous (literally, “faithless”) generation seeks signs. How do these words from Jesus strike you?
- Does faith demand proof? Why or why not?
- How does knowing that you don’t fight Satan alone help you as you resist him?
- How much easier is to fight when you know the guaranteed outcome (“strong, firm, and steadfast” in 1 Peter 5:10)?

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.

Weekly Prayer Focus . . . (from the worship guide)

- **Lives and Church:** *Pray for physical healing for people at The Gathering.*
- **Local:** *Pray for Stanly Community Christian Ministries, and specifically for them to receive the volunteers and funding necessary for their Helping Hands holiday project. This week we are also praying for First Assembly and Senior Pastor, Bob Gruver.*
- **Global:** *Pray for Phyllis Rose, an Assembly of God missionary to Peru, as she and her family grieve the recent loss of her mother.*