

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of November 17, 2019

This guide is designed to give helpful hints in preparing & leading your group in discussion.

LEADER NOTES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ONLINE FEEDBACK FORMS THIS WEEK

We'd like to have your group fill out Feedback Forms this week. Let your group know how important their honest feedback is for you as Leaders and Hosts.

Here's how the online forms work:

- *Everyone in your group will receive their own personal email with a link to their Feedback Form on Monday of this week. (Look for "Tell us about your Life Group!" in the subject.)*
- *Each unique email link is designed for that specific person and isn't meant to be shared.*
- *In the event that someone in your group can't find the email, you may share the generic link listed here with them. lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/feedback*
- *Please take the time in your Life Group to have everyone complete the form if they have not already done so on their own.*
- *It's just a couple of questions and should take less than 2 minutes to complete.*
- *We will be emailing you the results of your group's feedback in the coming weeks.*

NOTE: Senior groups have been mailed paper forms, but will receive digital forms as well. Your group can choose to do either.

⇒ DISCUSS PLANS FOR THE WINTER QUARTER & LAST MEETING

Find out from your group if they know their plans for being part of the group in the Winter. They can indicate their plans on the Feedback Forms. Also, let us know of any roster updates that you know of, or changes to your meeting day, time or location for the Winter quarter when you submit your attendance.

⇒ PRAYER FOR NEW WINTER LIFE GROUP LEADERS & HOSTS

Take some time to pray for new Leaders and Hosts to launch new Life Groups in the Winter.

LEADER INFO

NO LIFE GROUPS OVER THANKSGIVING

Just a reminder that there will be no Life Groups held over Thanksgiving Week, November 24-30.

IMPORTANT DATES

- Last Week of Life Group: December 1 – 7
- Winter Sign-Ups: January 4 & 5 and 11 & 12
- Winter Quarter: January 12 – March 14

ATTENDANCE

Submit your group's attendance online at northcoastchurch.com/attendance. If you're not sure how to post attendance, you can check out the guide here: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/how-to-post-attendance

Find all of our leader resources online: lifegroups.northcoastchurch.com/leader-tools

You can also follow us on Instagram and Facebook @ncclifegroupleaders

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time, or that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

MY STORY

1. Jesus had some bold words to say to God about having to die to save others. Do you agree or disagree with the statement that most people are afraid to be as honest with God as Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane? *There may be a variety of answers here. The goal here is to get everyone talking about how honest we are with God?*

Additional Questions: *Are you more honest with people than God? Why or why not? Why do you think some people are able to be more open than others?*

How much of our honesty with God has to do with our personality or life experience?

The next question helps open up the discussion with more specifics on this.

Using the options below, how would you say your prayer life is similar to or different from the way you communicate with those you're closest to?

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|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • More or less detailed | • More or less emotion |
| • More or less real / vulnerable | • More or less frequent |
| • More or less time | • More or less connection |
| • More or less focused | • Other |

You may want to chart your group and see who interacts with God the same way they do with other people, and who interacts differently. For example, "why are you more open with friends than with God, or with others?" "Do you have a trust issue with God or with your friends?"

2. Prayer is important just like communication is in any relationship. In what circumstances is it easiest for you to pray? When is it the hardest? What are some of your challenges and frustrations when it comes to regularly praying to our God?

Good question to have everyone answer.

Special note about prayer in this week's audio guide: *In the intro of the audio guide, there is a fuller explanation on the importance of understanding how prayer is often just thought of as long sessions before our God, and how quick short prayers are just for kids. Both are wrong. Both are essential to prayer and communication with God, in the same way that both types of communication are important in all of our significant relationships. [Click here for the audio guide.](#)*

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Larry talked about how it's okay to be honest and clear with God when we're struggling with His will for our lives. The Psalms are full of examples of David voicing his honest "complaints" to God over what was happening in his life. What can you learn from the following passages about what being honest with God looks like?

Psalm 13:1-6

- ¹ How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
- ² How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
- ³ Look on me and answer, Lord my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
- ⁴ and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.
- ⁵ But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
- ⁶ I will sing the Lord's praise,
for he has been good to me.

Psalm 142:1-7

- ¹ I cry aloud to the Lord;
I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.
- ² I pour out before him my complaint;
before him I tell my trouble.

- ³ When my spirit grows faint within me,
it is you who watch over my way.
In the path where I walk
people have hidden a snare for me.
- ⁴ Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;
no one is concerned for me.
I have no refuge;
no one cares for my life.
- ⁵ I cry to you, Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."
- ⁶ Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
- ⁷ Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.
Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me.

Do you think there is a difference between being honest and complaining?

There is a really thin line between the two things, and in a lot of ways, they're not much different. The idea that "I'm just being honest" can be a complaint. It's when you get locked into constantly complaining that we get stuck.

Additional Questions and Verses: *How do [Philippians 2:12-16](#) & [Proverbs 17:22](#) help us balance our complaining vs. honesty? What could be a downside to never hearing someone complain or be honest about disappointment? Should someone be willing to complain more?*

How can we honestly complain to God without it becoming a lack of trust?

When it becomes disobedience.

Additional Question: *In Psalm 13 above, David balances legitimate complaint with praise at the end. How do you find that balance in your life? Easy to do? Doesn't seem authentic? Not how you operate? Other?*

Has your willingness to be honest with God changed over the years? If so, what do you think has caused that change?

Good questions to have everyone answer.

2. We heard this weekend about the importance of being persistent in prayer. In 2 Samuel 12:15-23, King David is praying this kind of prayer as he seeks God's intervention on a critical issue. As you read this story, answer the questions below:

2 Samuel 12:15-23 – ¹⁵ After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

¹⁹ David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the Lord and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

²¹ His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

²² He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The Lord may be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³ But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Have you ever set aside extra time to dedicate yourself to prayer concerning a specific issue or concern? If so, explain.

This is not eluding to fasting necessarily, but could include that. We're not talking about a special prayer request, but rather repeated time to focus on one issue. Not everyone will have an answer to this.

In light of the challenges we face and our belief that prayer works, what are some obstacles to setting aside extra periods of time to repeatedly pray over an issue?

Brainstorm with your group and see how many examples you can come up with.

After repeatedly seeking God on an issue, have you ever experienced a response similar to David's? If so, explain.

This is alluding to the calm David had after realizing his son had died.

Based on what we've learned about the importance of persistence in our prayers, is there anything you might be giving up on a bit too early? Need to focus on more? Anything you need to let go of?

You may want to use this question for the Taking It Home Section. It's a good question to make sure you ask.

Discussion Note: *Good question to use to close your time together with.*

We all have different aptitudes and abilities when it comes to where, when and how much we pray. Yet we know ongoing communication and connection is vital to any healthy relationship, including with God. One reason we may find it difficult to pray with extra persistence is that we haven't created places and habits that help us pray and connect with God on an ongoing basis. Here are a few practical suggestions on how to develop your prayer life:

- Schedule it
- Get away on occasion
- Pray aloud to help you focus
- Listen as well as talk
- Use Scripture as your guide

Which if any of these do you already tend to do? Are there other ideas or suggestions you've found to be helpful when it comes to prayer and persistence?

Are there any you want to try to put into action?

Prayer Suggestion: *Instead of sharing your prayer requests and not getting much time to actually pray, try just praying your prayer requests in your group. Again, try to pray one topic at a time, short prayer, and pray repeatedly.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

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Desperate Prayers

THREE CATEGORIES

JESUS' DESPERATE PRAYER

Mark 14:32-42/ Matthew 26:36-46/ Luke 22:39-46

OUR DESPERATE PRAYERS

How to pray when the path God calls you to take is the path you don't want to take

- Don't try to tackle it **ALONE**
 Mark 14:32-33 & Matthew 26:37-38/ Galatians 6:2/ James 5:16
- **PRAY** about it, don't **STEW** on it
 Mark 14:39-41/ Philippians 4:6
- Be **HONEST** and **CLEAR**
 Mark 14:36/ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10
- Be **PERSISTENT**
 Mark 14:39-41/ James 5:16/ Luke 11:1-10/ Luke 18:1-8
 2 Corinthians 12:7-10/ Daniel 10:12-14/ Philippians 4:6-7
- Be **OBEDIENT**
 Mark 14:41-42/ Hebrews 12:2/ 2 Corinthians 12:8-9