

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

For the week of March 7, 2021

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

LEADER NOTES

PLEASE FINALIZE PLANS FOR THE SPRING QUARTER AT YOUR MEETING THIS WEEK IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY.

Let us know any changes to your group or indicate "NO CHANGES" when you submit your attendance. We need to know this week. Thank you!

Important Dates:

- Next week is the last meeting of the Winter Quarter.
- Spring Quarter Dates: March 28 - May 29
- Spring Quarter Sign-ups: March 20-28

MEETING NOTES

⇒ SERVE YOUR CITY – YOU CAN NOW SIGN UP AS A GROUP AT NORTHCOASTCHURCH.COM

Show [this video](#) to your group this week! Begin to help your group members make plans as to whether they are going to serve at home, with your group, or if they are going to create their own!

What is it?

Serve Your City is a church-wide, three-week campaign coming after Easter. Each week, we will focus on serving our community in three intentional and practical steps:

- Week 1: **GIVE** (*donate financially*)
- Week 2: **SERVE** (*participate in community service projects with your Life Group, with your family or on your own*)
- Week 3: **LOVE** (*intentionally show love to someone in your life*)

When is it?

March 6: **Serve Your City project sign-ups open!**

Week of April 11: **GIVE** *financially*

Week of April 18: **SERVE** *on a project*

Week of April 25: **LOVE** *someone*

How can you help?

1. Tell your group members about Serve Your City!
2. Head to northcoastchurch.com and click on "Serve Your City" to view service projects that have been created for you to serve. *Note, you may also create your own.*
3. Sign up to serve! We love to see Life Groups serving together! You will have the option to sign up your whole group for a project, or you can also sign up as individuals.

⇒ 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

QUICK REVIEW

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

MY STORY

1. Looking at the "three anchors that will save our ship" from this weekend's sermon, which one is easiest for you to remember in a "storm"? Which one is hardest for you to remember?

Alternative Question: Looking at the "three ways we can enter into a storm" from this weekend's sermon, which one is hardest for you not to do?

2. Chris talked this weekend about how during the storm, Paul was anchored in the presence of God. What words or images come to mind when you hear the phrase “presence of God”?

Good question to hear from everyone in the group. This will give you an idea of where each person is coming from as you enter into this week's study topic of the presence of God.

DIGGING DEEPER

Note: In this week's study questions, we are going to focus in on practicing the presence of God and what it means to have a relationship with Him.

This week's message was about storms. If you want to dive into the topic of storms or trials, feel free to go in that direction. Here are some resources from previous messages on similar topics:

- *Sermon & Study Questions from our Mark series (Christopher Hilken): [Jesus Calms the Storm](#)*
- *Daily Dose (Chris Brown): [What to do Amidst the Storm](#)*
- *Daily Dose (Christopher Hilken): [What it means to be prepared for the storms in our lives](#)*

1. For many of us, the idea of the presence of God is hard to connect with on a daily basis. We may think it is something we only experience at church or that it is reserved for feelers or charismatic believers. Yet, Scripture tells us every believer has the Spirit of God dwelling inside of them. As you read the verses below, what words or phrases stand out about what it means to have the presence of God with you?

Galatians 2:20 New International Version (NIV)

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

John 14:16-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.

Ephesians 3:16-17 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith...

Additional Verses:

- [Romans 8](#)
- [John 15:1-17](#)

Think for a moment about the differences between driving in the car with a friend versus by yourself. How is that experience different with another person present? How might knowing God's presence lives in us at all times change a person's experience of something?

Possible Examples: *When driving with a friend, I am most likely talking to or listening to them. I might ask what music they want to listen to, if the air conditioning is a good temperature for them, if they can navigate directions, etc. On a road trip, I might ask if they want snacks or to stop for anything. In general, I am attentive to the other person because they are with me. When I am by myself, I handle those (music, a/c, snacks, directions) as I please. When I remember God is with me, I am attentive to Him, His thoughts and desires.*

In *The Practice of the Presence of God*, 17th-century monk Brother Lawrence talks about being aware of God's presence daily by turning our attention toward Him in thought and prayer. How would you describe what practicing the presence of God looks like in your life?

Note: *This may look different for each person. This question gives you permission to have a different answer than Brother Lawrence for what practicing the presence of God looks like.*

Additional Questions:

- *How could this idea be taken to the extreme?*
- *How do I know if I am doing this enough or not?*
- *When do you sense God's presence most clearly or feel most connected to Him?*

Can you think of any distractions or obstacles that make it difficult for us to remember God's presence is with us?

Additional Questions:

- *What is one of the biggest obstacles or distractions keeping you from remembering God's presence?*
- *Can you think of a time in your life you struggled to remember God was with you in a storm? What did you learn from that experience in hindsight?*
- *Can you think of times you very clearly remembered God was with you? What made it easier to remember during that time?*

Make a list of any practical ways a person can remember to turn their attention toward God throughout their day.

Be creative with this. Feel free to brainstorm as a group. (Possible ideas: leave sticky notes with Scripture or a reminder to talk to God; set a reminder on your phone every day; have an accountability partner ask you about it; every time you think about a specific topic or person, talk to God about it.)

2. Many Christians tend to struggle with how to build a relationship with God. An important part of building and continuing any relationship is conversation. So, it makes sense that knowing and being with God involves talking with Him. Praying, or talking to God, is something Paul instructed believers about repeatedly. How do these verses speak to engaging in dialogue with God?

Romans 12:12 New International Version (NIV)

¹² Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray continually, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6 New International Version (NIV)

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Ephesians 6:18 New International Version (NIV)

¹⁸ And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

What do you think it means (or doesn't mean) to pray continually, without ceasing and on all occasions as Paul talks about in the verses?

Additional Questions:

- *How could this idea be taken to the extreme?*
- *How do I know if I am praying enough or not?*
- *Brother Lawrence says in The Practice of the Presence of God, "There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful, than that of a continual conversation with GOD..." What do you think he means by continual conversation with God?*

What are three things you talk to God about most frequently?

Looking at the three things you wrote, do they tend to involve:

- thanking God?
- asking God for something you need or desire?
- confessing or repenting?
- seeking wisdom for a decision you are making?
- asking God about something you want to learn or grow in?
- listening?
- other: _____

From the list above, is there an aspect of prayer you would like to focus on more when talking to God?

Additional Questions:

- *A common acronym for prayer is A.C.T.S. (Adoration for God, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication- asking God for something). How do you see these elements of prayer reflected in your prayer life?*
- *How often do you talk to God without asking for something?*
- *How would you describe your comfort level in talking to God?*
- *What is hardest for you about talking to God?*
- *What possible ideas could make it easier?*
- *How would you describe your prayer life?*

TAKING IT HOME

Facilitation Tip: Use any one or all of these questions to end your time and lead into prayer. This would be a good time to break into smaller groups (breakout rooms on Zoom) to discuss.

1. Looking back on this week's sermon and study, what's most important for you to remember?

2. Are there any simple ways you want to remember to practice the presence of God more in your life?

3. Is there a conversation with God you want to have this week?

Reminder: Talk to your group members about *Serve Your City!*

PRAYER REQUESTS

→

→

→

→

→

→



SERVE YOUR CITY

Serve Your City is a three-week, church-wide event in which we will focus on giving, serving and loving our community. Sign-ups are open online at northcoastchurch.com and at all weekend services! Sign up to serve today!

Shipwrecked: What To Do When We Don't Know What To Do

Three ways we can enter into a storm:

Acts 27:1-13, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Proverbs 3:5-6, 12:15, 19:20, 21:15

Listening to the **WRONG EXPERTS**

Deciding to go with the **MAJORITY**

Going with what we **THINK IS BEST**

Three problems storms can create for us:

Acts 27:14-20, Joshua 1:5-9, Matthew 6:19-34

Storms can cause us to drift from our **GOALS** and **VALUES**.

Storms can cause us to **THROW OUT** what's **MOST VALUABLE** to us.

Storms can lead to **DESPAIR**.

Three anchors that will save our ship:

Acts 27:21-26

God's **PRESENCE**

God's **PURPOSE**

God's **PROMISES**