

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Your Story

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

February 26, 2012

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

Week 3 of the "@ our core" series focused on the last of our **UNDENIABLE** core values: We value **Your Story** and expect the telling of it to give grace to others and glory to God. Things to remember about your story (which is your testimony):

1. **It is personal:** There are a lot of things that we may not know about our faith (theology, doctrine, etc.) but there is one thing we do know: what Jesus has done for us.
2. **It is powerful:** Your story gives you power to overcome accusations from Satan and criticism from people. What God has done in your life – when lived with consistency – can silence the strongest critic.
3. **It is profound:** Just like the testimony of the Lord's holiness by the seraphs shook the temple in Isaiah 6, so the telling of our stories does something in a realm that we cannot always see, and it is critical to the redemptive work of God in our culture.

Discuss

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

- A lot of people think that they don't have a story to tell unless they've done something really horrible before coming to Christ, but a story worth telling is any story that gives grace to those listening and

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brings glory to God as its Author. Take time to go around the group and allow each person to tell one of their stories. (If this is intimidating, allow the group to break into pairs, or men in one room and women in the other.)

- We know from Revelation 12:11 that our testimonies are powerful for overcoming Satan's accusations. What can we learn from James 5:16 about what happens when we share our stories with each other?
- One of the benefits of sharing stories – according to James 5:16 – is that we know who to talk to about our own struggles because we've been able to hear about other people who may have similar struggles that they have overcome.
- 2 Corinthians 1:4 describes a cycle of comfort: we receive comfort and then we share that comfort with others who need it. In what areas of your life are you qualified to give comfort because God has comforted you?
- Close the discussion by allowing people to pray for others in the group who may be struggling in areas that are similar to areas that others have a testimony of overcoming. (Ex: A husband who has overcome marital difficulty could pray for another husband who is having marital difficulty)

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?
- 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.