

Community Group Guide

@ our core – Unwavering Prayer

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

April 22, 2012

various

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

In week eleven of the "@ our core" series, Pastor Paul talked about the greatest tool we have in our arsenal and also the greatest source of frustration among many believers: a consistent prayer life. At The Gathering, we value **Unwavering Prayer** and expect our desperate cries to change the spiritual atmosphere around us. In fact, we learned two truths about God in prayer that led us to one inescapable conclusion. They are:

1. **God hears when we pray:** Nobody likes to be ignored, and sometimes it feels as if God ignores us when we pray. But the Bible is clear in Luke 1:8-13, Exodus 2:23-25, Exodus 22:23,27 and 1 John 5:14-15 that our prayers are heard. We can take great comfort in that.
2. **God moves when we pray:** Not only does God hear us when we pray, but He does something when we pray. He moves in response to our heartfelt prayers, and we can have confidence in that fact. We see in the Bible that God moved in response to prayers by Moses (Exodus 32:9-14), Abraham (Genesis 18:16-33), Hannah (1 Samuel 1:10-20), and the needy (Psalm 72:12).
3. **And so, we pray:** Since we know that God is always listening and always moving, it makes sense that we should always be praying. We can pray with humility, determination, confidence and expectation! According to Daniel 10:12, the answer is on its way to us from the moment our first prayer is uttered, so pray on!!!!

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Discuss

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

- Have someone read 2 Corinthians 3:4. What is one of the benefits we receive from being followers of Christ?
- Often we wrestle between confidence in Christ and no confidence in ourselves. Paul struggled with this, too, and wrote about it in 2 Corinthians 3:4-5. What insight can we gain from those 2 verses that can help us in areas like prayer where we may feel very inadequate?
- Ephesians 3:12 talks about one area in our spiritual lives where this confidence can really help. What is it?
- What happens when we approach God in prayer with confidence? Read Hebrews 4:16. How does knowing that God ALWAYS hears and ALWAYS moves give us confidence?
- Sometimes the best encouragement about God hearing and moving when we pray comes from the stories of answered prayer in the lives of people we know. Take some time to share the stories from your group.
- As we've learned, sharing our stories is such a great faith-builder for others, and now would be a perfect time to pray for people in the group who, like Daniel in Daniel 10, have prayed and are waiting for the answer. Who needs the encouragement of prayer in the group tonight?

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.