



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 the second week of our series, "thankFULL," our guest speaker – Gary Sadler – shared with us about the importance of not stopping short in our worship. He shared multiple passages in the Bible that showed what the priests did in the Old Testament and then shared Scriptures from the New Testament telling us that we are now priests. If that's so, we are to perform the priestly function in our worship, too.

Old Testament priests entered the presence of God and then interceded for the 12 tribes of Israel. They drew near God (the Hebrew word for priest means "one who draws near") just as our mission is to be near God, but Gary challenged us to draw near God with a purpose. The priests had a purpose for being in God's presence, and it was to pray for the people and also to hear from God what He wanted to tell the people. When our worship is "me-centered" we lose this crucial function of the priest.

A sure-fire way to find our hearts more and more full of thanks in our worship is to take our eyes off of ourselves and begin to walk daily as priests in our lives. Worship is what we do with our lives, not just the hour or two on Sundays in a service. Truly worshiping in our homes, our schools, and our jobs will create in us a passion for the God we're near and the people around us that He's sending us to.



Discuss

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

- What happens when we limit worship to a section of a service?
- 1 Peter 2:9 says that we are a royal priesthood. How does it feel to read about yourself being described this way?
- The very next verse talks about the changes in our lives. What 2 specific changes are mentioned?
- How will your role as a priest be different in light of the changes mentioned in 1 Peter 2:10?
- At The Gathering, we are focused on being Near God, Near man, Making Disciplers. According to Ephesians 2:13-14, what brought us near to God?
- What has Jesus destroyed?
- What relationships in your life currently have a dividing wall in them?
- Respond to the following statement: God has made you a priest in His presence in order to destroy the walls in your relationships.

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 the leadership at The Gathering: Paul Jenkins, Lead Pastor; Jay Phillips, Elder; Larry Emerick, Elder.*
- **Local:** *Pray for the homeless in our area, especially as the nights get colder this time of year. This week we are also praying for Growing Family Church and Senior Pastor, Larry Wilkins.*
- **Global:** *Pray for Dave and Judy Eddy, missionaries to Papua New Guinea and the parents of Bethany Thompson at The Gathering.*