

Christ Community Church

B.L.E.S.S. Community Group Guide // April 18 - 24, 2021

Take some time to share:

One thing that you are thankful for this week.

One thing you are in need of (try and stick to one thing and personally related).

How can the group help?

Week 2 – Begin with Prayer

Message Big Idea - In order to BLESS our neighbor, Jesus invites us to begin with prayer.

Scripture - Luke 11:1-13; Luke 6:12-16

Icebreaker and Opening Thought

1. What is one particular routine that you especially enjoy in your daily life?
2. Through the years we've discovered that the best way to live the mission of "helping people find their way back to God" is to be a BLESSing to the people and places God puts in our lives. The acronym, BLESS, stands for five missional practices we can do to carry out the Jesus mission every day: Begin with prayer, Listen, Eat together, Serve, and Share your story. How comfortable are you with prayer?

Bible Discussion

3. Read Luke 6:12-16. What do you notice about this passage?
4. Jesus often withdrew alone to pray to discern his next steps. (see Luke 3:21, 5:16, 9:16a, 22:32, & 22:41). Does Jesus' example encourage or discourage you? Explain.
5. Jesus did not choose as followers those who everyone liked the most or even the obvious choices. For some reason, he chose fishermen, tax collectors, a religious zealot, and a man who would later betray him. Why might this be important?

Life Application

6. What is your expectation and experience of prayer?
7. In what ways does prayer change us?

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The message gave us a three-step guide for prayer this week:

- Plan: If we want to be intentional about setting time apart to pray, we need to put it on our calendar and set a time to pray. How do you feel about being that intentional about prayer?
 - Prepare: As you pray, ask God to prepare your heart for the adventure. Ask God to give you eyes to see people with compassion. Can you share a time when you've prayed, and God has directed you towards someone?
 - Places/People: As you pray, make a mental map of the places you will visit for the day. Who are some of the people that you will encounter? Maybe God has already put in your heart a place or people that you are supposed to BLESS. Pray for those places, pray for those people, and ask God for an opportunity to BLESS.
8. There will be days that nothing will happen, so don't give up. There will be other days when something will happen. What are some places you want to pray for God to provide opportunities?

Challenge - The challenge is to set apart some time to pray every day. We don't have to start by praying all night as Jesus did, or even a whole hour as he asked his disciples to do, but we can all begin by praying at least 5 minutes in the morning and 1 or 2 minutes at night.

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WEEK 2 – Leader’s Guide

Icebreaker & Opening Thought - Help the group to explore their experience of prayer.

Bible Discussion

- John Bunyan once said: “You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.” Jesus knows this, which is why whenever we see Jesus facing a critical decision or an important action, he spends extra time in prayer. Prayer was more important for Jesus than food or rest. Prayer was spiritual food. It is his open secret to being connected with God.
- We often think of the twelve apostles as the only disciples Jesus had, but that is not true. He had hundreds, and maybe thousands of other disciples. Out of them, Jesus chose twelve to give his time, energy, and attention. Those twelve we call apostles, which means “sent ones.”
- God’s way of fulfilling his purposes are not always obvious to our natural way of thinking. According to 1 Corinthians 1:26-29, God chooses the humble, the lowly, the weak, and the meek over the strong, talented, powerful, or the rich. God chooses those we might overlook, so when he works powerfully through them, his power and wisdom are made known among us. If you feel like you are not qualified to be a follower of Jesus or to be a person on mission, you are in good company. God’s people have often fit into this category.

Life Application

- Help the group understand that the goal of prayer is not just to talk to God, but also a time to listen to God and enjoy his presence in silence.
- Sometimes God speaks to us in a loud voice and sometimes in a whisper or a feeling. Help the group recognize there is no single way to “hear” from God.
- Luke 11:1-10 lists a number of ways that prayer can change us: it draws us to God (v2 Father, hallowed be), focuses our priorities (v2 thy kingdom come), reminds us of our dependence on God (v3 gives us each day), Softens our hearts (v4 forgive), keeps us on the right path (v4 lead us not), & moves us into action (v9-10 ask, seek & knock).

Challenge - The challenge for all of us is to set apart some time to pray every day. We don’t have to start by praying all night as Jesus did, not even a whole hour as he asked his disciples to do, but we can all begin by praying at least 5 minutes in the morning and 1 or 2 minutes at night.