

Reading Scripture in Community

Group Set-Up and Homework

1. Schedule a time and location, to meet weekly together for 60-90 minutes.
2. Select a book of the Bible to read and reflect on. The specific text chosen should be a discernible section of scripture focused on one main idea or story. Your group will read one chapter of that book per week in consecutive order.
3. Group members read the chapter on their own prior to weekly meeting and use the following questions for journaling/reflection:
 - a. What does this chapter teach you about who God, Jesus, and The Holy Spirit are?
 - b. What Does this section teach you about God's people and plan?
 - c. Did reading this chapter answer any prior questions you may have had?
 - d. What, if any, new or lingering questions do you have after reading this chapter?
 - e. How do I incorporate this in my life?

Group Schedule

1. In the gathering, open your time in prayer and then read the chapter aloud twice, preferably by two different people.
2. Discuss as a group the questions and journaling from the week related to the chapter. Invite group members to also share anything new that may have stood out to them during the group reading.
3. Before closing, ask group members to share specific actions they have decided to take during the coming week in response to what they have learned from the chapter.
 - a. At the beginning of the following week's meeting take time to check in with one another about these actions and how they resulted.
 - b. This allows the group to encourage one another and provide a sense of accountability.

Prayer

Close the time together in prayer. Prayer requests can be shared verbally or written down, and it may be helpful to limit the amount of time and/or the number of requests a person can share. Go around the group and have each person pray for someone else in the group. If the group is new or uncomfortable praying together you can have everyone use the simple phrase: "God be with _____ and help them with _____."

Dwelling in the Word - Group Scripture Reading

Preparation

1. Schedule a time, location, and frequency (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, etc.) to meet together for 30-60 minutes.
2. Select a scripture passage of approximately 20 consecutive verses to read and reflect on. The specific text chosen should be a discernible section of scripture focused on one main idea or story. A different text can be chosen for each meeting, but it can be beneficial to use the same text over several different meetings.

Main Group Time

1. In the gathering read the text aloud twice, preferably by two different people.
2. As you listen to the text, ask the following questions:
 - As you hear the text, where does your mind stop?
 - What word(s), phrase(s), or idea(s) jump out at you?
 - Why do you think you stopped there?
 - How do you think God's Spirit might be leading you?
3. Take turns sharing with each other where your mind stops and your answers to the other questions. If the group is large enough, you may want to break up into smaller groups of two or three to share. Depending on the size of the group and the time allotted for the gathering it may be helpful to set a time limit for how long each person can share.
4. If you have split up into smaller groups, then bring everyone back together and invite each member to report back to the group what they heard their partner(s) share (i.e. "What I heard ____ say was ____."). It may be helpful to decide ahead of time which individual will report the thoughts of another specific member. Regardless of whether you stayed in one group or broke into smaller groups, each person should share what they heard another person say and have their own thoughts shared by someone else. This may be difficult as members will be tempted to report on their personal thoughts. However, reporting back on the thoughts of someone else is an important part of listening to God and one another.

Conclusion

1. After everyone has had their thoughts shared by another, take a few minutes and see if you notice any common themes. Reflect together on any word(s) or idea(s) that were repeated.
2. Close the time together in prayer. Prayer requests can be shared verbally or written down, and it may be helpful to limit the amount of time and/or the number of requests a person can share. Go around the group and have each person pray for someone else in the group. If the group is new or uncomfortable praying together you can have everyone use the simple phrase: "God be with ____ and help them with ____."