

Weekend message Small group study

- complementing the sermon given at St. Paul on 11/8/14 – 11/9/14
- a meeting agenda organized per St. Paul core values
- estimated for a 90-minute meeting

Equipping “the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”—Eph. 4:12

Below is a tool to help delegate the leading/facilitating of meeting components between different small group members.

	Prayer (p.5)	Outreach (p.3)	Word of God (p.2)	Equipping (p. 5)	Worship - Our Redemption Response - (p.1)
Study component leader					

Prayer leader – Leads group prayer time

Outreach leader – Leads the charge of outreach (serving, inviting, filling the empty chair, etc.)

Word of God leader – Leads the Bible study time, encourages application of God’s Word to life

Equipping Leader – Coordinates and reminds who will lead the different meeting components.

Worship (Our Redemption Response) Leader – Leads worship time during meeting.

Introduction

¹⁴“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, ¹⁵just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd.” (John 10:14-16 ESV)

Worship – Our Redemption Response

5 minutes

All: How tenderly You care for us, Jesus, our Shepherd! When we hear Your reassuring voice we know that we are secure. When we wander far away You search for us. And when you find us, You hoist us upon Your strong shoulders, rejoicing that we have been found. You are the gate that leads to the fold of salvation. You are the fold in which we find safety. While we are in danger, You lay down Your own life for us. You give us the gift of life, life to the full. Oh to know You, gracious Shepherd, and to be known by You—this is true life! Amen.

adapted from Maranatha’s *The NIV Worship Bible*, © 2000, p. 1439

Word of God

45 minutes

1. How has God been messing with you these days to know Him more?
2. **Read John 10:14-16 again** (the introduction verse). What does it mean to you to be known by Jesus?
3. If Jesus knows each of us and we are a part of his “one flock”, what does this infer for those of His flock in how we know each other?
4. **Read Acts 2:42-47**. What do you see in these verses on how the believers in the early church knew each other?
5. How can we model the early church today in respect of knowing each other?
6. *Brief story* - In Michael Reagan's book *Twice Adopted*, Michael shared a story of him and his adoptive father Ronald Reagan. Michael angrily shared with his wife on how his father never said he loved him. His wife replied, “Well...have you ever told him?” Convicted by that question, Michael did just that. Ronald quickly replied, “I love you too.” After that moment every time father and son left each other they shared their love for each other and hugged. Even when Ronald Reagan was in the later stages of Alzheimer's and had forgotten Michael's name, he awaited his son's hug. One time Michael left his father and mistakenly forgot to hug him. As they were leaving, Michael's wife asked him to look back. There was Ronald with arms out waiting for his hug. All of this began with Michael and his willingness to take that first step.

In our culture, in our congregations, many find it difficult to connect with others. It is easy to make the excuse, “I've never gotten to know anyone here, because no one has ever approached me.” What if **you** were the one to take that first step?

What next step will you take today, tomorrow, at weekend worship to get to know another?

How may we gracefully hold each other accountable to this and check back with each other on this challenge the next time we meet?

Outreach

15 minutes

We've discussed Jesus knowing us and us knowing each other. Now let's look at what it could mean for us knowing those who do not yet know Jesus (the "other sheep that are not of this fold").

Take turns reading *I Stand at the Door* [next page] by Sam Shoemaker (Note: Sam was one of the early influencers of the Alcoholics Anonymous movement which gathered momentum in the 1920s and '30s.)

*I stand by the door.
I neither go to far in, nor stay to far out.
The door is the most important door in the world -
It is the door through which men walk when they find God.
There is no use my going way inside and staying there,
When so many are still outside and they, as much as I,
Crave to know where the door is.
And all that so many ever find
Is only the wall where the door ought to be.
They creep along the wall like blind men,*

*With outstretched, groping hands,
Feeling for a door, knowing there must be a door,
Yet they never find it.
So I stand by the door.*

*The most tremendous thing in the world
Is for men to find that door - the door to God.
The most important thing that any man can do
Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands
And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks
And opens to the man's own touch.
Men die outside the door, as starving beggars die
On cold nights in cruel cities in the dead of winter.
Die for want of what is within their grasp.
They live on the other side of it - live because they have not found it.*

*Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,
And open it, and walk in, and find Him.
So I stand by the door.*

*Go in great saints; go all the way in -
Go way down into the cavernous cellars,
And way up into the spacious attics.
It is a vast, roomy house, this house where God is.
Go into the deepest of hidden casements,
Of withdrawal, of silence, of sainthood.
Some must inhabit those inner rooms
And know the depths and heights of God,
And call outside to the rest of us how wonderful it is.
Sometimes I take a deeper look in.
Sometimes venture in a little farther,*

*But my place seems closer to the opening.
So I stand by the door.*

*There is another reason why I stand there.
Some people get part way in and become afraid
Lest God and the zeal of His house devour them;
For God is so very great and asks all of us.*

*And these people feel a cosmic claustrophobia
And want to get out. 'Let me out!' they cry.
And the people way inside only terrify them more.*

*Somebody must be by the door to tell them that they are spoiled.
For the old life, they have seen too much:
One taste of God and nothing but God will do any more.
Somebody must be watching for the frightened
Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,
To tell them how much better it is inside.
The people too far in do not see how near these are
To leaving - preoccupied with the wonder of it all.
Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door
But would like to run away. So for them too,*

I stand by the door.

*I admire the people who go way in.
But I wish they would not forget how it was
Before they got in. Then they would be able to help
The people who have not yet even found the door.
Or the people who want to run away again from God.
You can go in too deeply and stay in too long
And forget the people outside the door.
As for me, I shall take my old accustomed place,
Near enough to God to hear Him and know He is there,
But not so far from men as not to hear them,
And remember they are there too.*

*Where? Outside the door -
Thousands of them. Millions of them.
But - more important for me -
One of them, two of them, ten of them.
Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.
So I shall stand by the door and wait
For those who seek it.*

*'I had rather be a door-keeper
So I stand by the door.*

Break into triads or foursomes for the following questions:

1. What emotion does this poem stir inside of you?
2. Who does God want you to stand by the door for?
3. Why is it important for small groups to have an open door?

excerpt from Missions International's 2005 *Groups Ablaze (SG)2 Certified Trainer's Guide*

Prayer

20 minutes

Share a prayer request based on what was discussed during this meeting's *Word of God* and/or *Outreach* time. What is that next step in your faith life God is calling you to make? What convicted you from God's Word and/or our discussion of His Word? Please also share a way in which the group may support/encourage you regarding what you've shared. Of course other important matters can be prayed about as well. After all have shared, pray for the person on your left (whether aloud or silently). Pray together in popcorn style (as opposed to going in order around a circle.)

Equipping *for coordinating next week's meeting...*

5 minutes

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