



Living Hope Alliance Church Group Leader's Guide

For the week of May 15, 2016

Preparing for your week.

If you're scrambling to prepare for this week's Group time, you're probably not alone. At this time in our journey together it's likely you're in one of two places, either you're excited and on top of the game, or you're feeling like busyness is setting in and preparing for Groups is less preparation and more last minute.

We all feel this way some time in facilitating. Weariness sets in and we let our preparation and intentionality slide. If this is you, we want to encourage you to keep going. What you are doing is helping people connect with others and connect more closely in relationship with God.

We're hearing such good stories coming out of the Groups. Stories of people who didn't know really anyone at the church feeling a sense of home. Having someone you know to speak to or sit with on a Sunday morning is so valuable. Thank you for letting your hospitality in Groups extend outward beyond your meeting times. You're making a difference!

And we hope that you are feeling the sense of community that comes with being part of Groups. As we as facilitators are more vulnerable and willing to share, it not only opens that door for others, but it feeds into our God-given need to be in community with one another.

And, as always, don't forget that the gift of your presence and desire to care for others is a wonderful gift to those around you! Creating an atmosphere where we recognize that we're all in this journey together is something that blesses everyone in your group, leaders included!

Getting to Know Each Other

Take the time to check in with people to see how their week has gone so far. If prayer requests come up, feel free to pray for them immediately or at a time of prayer of your choosing during the evening.

Suggested Questions: Have you ever had a nemesis? Someone in your life who you seemed to be constantly competing with?

Or has there been someone in your life who you always wished you could be like? What about them or their life made you wish you could be like them?

Sermon Discussion Time

- 1.) Often there are parts of ourselves or our situations that we wish were different, how we look, what we own, how our families act. Can you think of a time when you looked at someone else and wished that you could trade part of your life or who you are with them?
- 2.) Often our identity is tied up in who we are, what we look like, what we do. These elements can focus on things that make us feel good about ourselves or things that make us feel negatively about who we are. Take a minute to think about three elements that you believe make up your identity. If you feel comfortable, share these with the group.

Follow up question: When did this view of your identity start? Was it something you heard other people say or something you internalized?

Recap the Prodigal Son story and then read or have someone else read Luke 15:25-31

Or, read Luke 15:11-31 if people are unfamiliar with the story.

- 3.) When we look at the older brother we see three symptoms of envy: isolation, comparison, and condemnation. Isolation is avoiding being around other people because it makes you feel bad. Comparison is looking at someone else's situation and feeling bad because it didn't work out for you. Condemnation is putting other people down or gossiping about the person that you're comparing yourself to. Looking at these three symptoms of envy, do you see evidence of any or all of these in your life? If you feel comfortable, share an example with the group.

Read or have someone else read 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

- 4.) When we start to envy people it's often because we don't have a clear sense of our identity. We know that the solution to envy is knowing who we are and how we fit.

As you think about the passage that was just read, what does that speak to you about your identity?

- 5.) Going forward into this week, what are some ways that we can begin focussing on the truth of what God tells us about who we are? How can we encourage one another as part of this group? As part of our church community?

Going Deeper

- 1.) When we talk about gift-based serving many people may not know what their gifts are. What is your experience in hearing about gift-based serving? Is this something you have experienced personally?
- 2.) For those in your group who have experienced gift-based serving, are they currently serving in a place that reflects how they are gifted? For those who have not had this experience, take time to ask them their interests and areas that they may be interested in exploring the idea of gift-based serving.

As a group, encourage one another to explore ways of serving with your gifts. If people don't know where to start, help one another to connect with the ministry leaders in our church to begin the conversation about serving opportunities.