

## Let's Go Group Studies

### Leader's Notes

1. We're providing this material to you to remove some of the stress and frustration of developing a plan to lead a specific group study. It isn't meant to replace your individual preparation to lead. Our hope is that you would use it as a guide to your engagement with the text and the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead you as you help your study's participants to have their own relevant encounter with scripture and the Holy Spirit.
2. This plan isn't meant to constrain you to lead in any specific way. **Please do modify it to better meet the needs of your group and to honor your gifting and authentic style.** For example, when and how you pray and share prayer needs should be in a rhythm that is good for your group as long as you are praying as a group. For another, who reads and how scripture is read should fit your group and its needs as long as it is read somehow.
3. **Be authentic.** If you find yourself saying "They are asking" as in, 'I didn't write this question and I don't really understand why it is being asked.' Don't ask it. Ask something else. It is okay not to understand everything. No one understands everything. If you don't believe in what you're saying, why should anyone else believe it? One way to turn this into a positive is to admit to the group that you are struggling with figuring out a particular bit and allow someone else to contribute their God-given wisdom.
4. Some questions, especially earlier in the study, aren't meant to be a mile deep or transformative. These questions are intended to prompt the participants to notice what is there. They give the participants a way to begin to care about the specific words on the page and to begin to discuss the relevance of the scripture to their needs.
5. Portions of the plan in quotes are meant to be spoken out loud to the group as in, "Who's buried in Grant's Tomb?" You don't have to repeat the question or statement exactly as it appears. Restate it in a way that feels comfortable and natural for you.
6. Portions of the plan in *italics* are meant to be notes to you that you can use as prompts in aiding group discussion and aren't intended to be read verbatim to the group. They may not be the definitive answer but should be a good possible answer. As part of your preparation, please add to and edit the notes to fit where you intend to lead the discussion.
7. A **Follow up question** helps participants open up a little more and look a little deeper and is meant to be asked after there has been some discussion of the prior question.
8. The last page is the participant handout.
9. Please remember that our focus, purpose and practice is to **Love God, Love Others and Make Disciples.**

## Loving Our Community

- 1) Scripture: Acts 16:16-40
- 2) Objective: After studying the listed scripture and participating in the discussion, each person should be able to identify their strongest and weakest abilities to lovingly respond to those around them and commit to praying about using both of those abilities.
- 3) Resources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7mURm-8cOI>  
& <https://www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles/>
- 4) Preparation:
  - A. Pray for guidance
  - B. Review Leader's Notes and read entire lesson plan
- 5) Prayer requests & Open in prayer
- 6) Intro:
  - A. "Last time I asked you what practical benefits for you, your family and your fellow believers do you think would come from your engaging in a Discipleship Group? Would anyone be willing to share if they discovered any new insights about those benefits or are planning on joining a D-Group?"
    - i) *If you closed last time's study with a different question or application, substitute your closing for this one.*
  - B. "Paul and Silas were confronted with injustice, persecution, lies, illegal behavior and demonic interference. God miraculously freed them, and they chose to stay in their cell. From a human perspective, their response doesn't make sense. But God used their loving response to change hearts and save souls. Let's look at how the love they showed for people, people who didn't deserve that love, is a model for how we can show love in our own spheres of influence.
  - C. When we are done, each of us should be able to identify both our strongest and weakest abilities to lovingly respond to those people and situations that we encounter every day. I am going to ask you to pray about receiving opportunities to exercise those abilities."
- 7) The study
  - A. Ask for a volunteer to read Acts 16:16-18
  - B. Ask everyone to complete question 1 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

i) "What do you find that is ordinary in this passage? ...and what do you find that is extraordinary?"

(1) *Ordinary: Paul and Silas going about sharing the Gospel like its their job.*

(2) *Extraordinary: Paul and Silas going about sharing the Gospel like its their job. Demon-possessed girl who had a reputation for revealing spiritual things confirming the truth about Paul and Silas and their reason for being there. Paul casting out the girl's demon out of frustration.*

C. Ask "If you think of yourself as a 'Servant of the Most High God, what does that look like to you?"

i) *It is ordinary for a servant to serve in the way they are directed. For Paul and Silas, sharing the Gospel was integral to who they were.*

D. Ask "Why might Paul have become frustrated with the daily announcements of the slave girl?"

i) *He might not have wanted his ministry to be associated with a fortune teller in the minds of the people he was trying to reach.*

E. Ask for a volunteer to read Acts 16:19-40

F. Ask everyone to complete question 2 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.

i) "There are a series of events of evil and injustice attempting to overcome Paul and Silas and their service to God in this passage. How would you describe or summarize their response to these attempts?"

(1) *Responding with good for injustice; Praising God; Compassion for the lost; Offering mercy in place of demanding justice; Being ready to share the gospel when the opportunity comes.*

(2) *None of these are small easy things and they go against what our broken human nature desire.*

(3) *Please don't miss that a miracle happened. It might seem almost ungrateful to God that He would free them and then they declined to leave the prison. See how their response created opportunity.*

G. **Follow-up Question** "How do each of these responses model love for the community?"

i) *They put the needs of others above our own. They are all things that Jesus not only taught but did. They honor God and reflect well on Him when we do them.*

- H. Ask everyone to complete question 3 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
- i) “Of these Christlike attitudes and responses that we’ve identified, which to you seems the easiest for you to live out and which seems the most difficult?”  
*Ideally, these answers come from the participants. Whether they get them from the study, the Sunday sermon or elsewhere, the best thing that can happen here is they are verbalized by the participants. If they struggle to answer...*

(1) *Please help your group participants to identify their strong and weak areas.*

- I. Ask everyone to complete question 4 on the handout. Allow 3-5 minutes for them to finish and then ask for volunteers to share their answers.
- i) “During this week, please pray several times that the Holy Spirit would give you the opportunity show love in your best way to those you interact with each day. Then ask Him to lead and teach you to respond with love in the area in which you are the weakest?”

8) Summary:

- A. Encourage your group members to pray for the things they identified in question 4 and to check out the web links on their handout that explain one way to share the Gospel. Plan on asking them next week about the results.
- B. Close in prayer – Use Jeremiah 29:7 - “But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.”

# Loving Our Community

Acts 16:16-40

- 1) What do you find that is ordinary in this passage? ...and what do you find that is extraordinary?
  
- 2) There are a series of events of evil and injustice attempting to overcome Paul and Silas and their service to God in this passage. How would you describe or summarize their response to these attempts?
  
- 3) Of these Christlike attitudes and responses that we've identified, which to you seems the easiest for you to live out and which seems the most difficult?
  
- 4) During this week, please pray several times that the Holy Spirit would give you the opportunity show love in your best way to those you interact with each day. Then ask Him to lead and teach you to respond with love in the area in which you are the weakest?

For many of us, sharing the Gospel is the most intimidating thing we are called to do as a 'Servant of the Most High God.' Here are two web links that explain a simple method for sharing that we all need Jesus as our Savior.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7mURm-8cOI>  
<https://www.namb.net/evangelism/3circles/>

For next time... Read Mark 10:32-45