



THREE EXPERIENCES

As a Leader, we encourage you to take your LifeGroup through “3 Experiences”. The experiences are:

1. Prayer
2. Serve
3. Share Your Story

Prayer: In each semester of your LifeGroup, we want to encourage you as Leaders to lead your LifeGroup through a prayer experience. Look to start your prayer experience at Week 3 of your LifeGroup. This means you'd pray during the entire time of your meet-up. A suggested time line or experience may look like the following:

Suggested Prayer Outline:

- Consider playing some calming worship music in the background during the experience.
- 15-20 minutes of devotion utilizing any of the tools listed below.
- 15-30 minutes of praying as a group. Encourage everyone in the group to share a prayer request or a praise report. Lead your group to stand together and have each individual pray for the person to their left. This gives everyone the opportunity to pray for someone in their group. It may be uncomfortable as it will be many peoples first time praying out loud. Simply encourage them through it. This part of the experience can take 15-30 minutes. Discern where God is leading you and the group.
- 10-15 minutes of individual prayer. Create a time and encourage people to pray on their own. This would be a great time to provide them with the “Lord’s Prayer” outline which can serve as a guide for personal prayer.
- Letter from God: Encourage people to bring something to write with and have them write a letter from God as if He’s speaking to them. This is a very moving moment so be sure to lead the people in your group well through other forms of prayer prior to this moment.
- 10-15 minutes of a Debrief: Take time to talk about what everyone experienced. Ask your group how God moved in their prayer. What were their thoughts before the experience versus their thoughts after the experience. Encourage people to share their feelings on anything relevant from God and how can we continue to add these moments in our lives daily.

Tools for Prayer:

- Our Divine Helper (The Holy Spirit): John 14:16-17, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:30, Romans 8:11, 1 Corinthians 2:10-12, Ephesians 3:16 and Galatians 5:22-23.

- Purpose of Prayer: Hebrews 4:16, John 10:3-4
- The Lord's Prayer: Utilize the Lord's Prayer as a reference guide.
- Pray Privately: Jesus went away to pray on his own (Luke 9:18 and Mark 1:35).
- Pray Regularly: Jesus made prayer a daily rhythm in his life. Through prayer, he demonstrated a vibrant relationship with our Heavenly Father through the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 6:18).
- Pray Genuinely: Don't focus on trying to impress others or God with your prayers. God wants to hear your prayers from your heart and he wants them to be genuine (Matthew 6:5-7).
- Praise: Throughout the Bible, our God is praised over 350 times. When we praise our God, we are acknowledging how great our God is and all He has done for us (Psalm 9:1-2).
- Repent: To repent means to confess our specific sin to God and turn away from doing them again (1 John 1:8-9).
- Ask: We serve a God that encourages us to come to Him and ask what is on our mind. Jesus wants us to learn how to ask and understand what our heavenly Father wants to share with us (Matthew 7:7-11).
- Listen: Once we've made our request known to God, we must become great listeners to carry out His instruction. We must regularly position ourselves to take time to listen to the voice of God. This can serve as an encouragement in building our faith when we remember what God has done in our life due to our obedience.

12 things to consider Praying

1. **Pray for those in Authority**: (President, senators, legislators and judges) Romans 13:1 and 1 Timothy 2:1-4
2. **Pray for Churches**: (Pastors, Staff, Dream Teams & all facets of ministry) Psalm 1:1-3, Psalm 133:1, Luke 4:18, Luke 10:19, Philippians 1:27, Romans 10:14-15 and Matthew 9:37-38
3. **Pray for the Lost**: (all those needing Jesus) John 3:16 and Matthew 18:18
4. **Pray for our City**: (Mayor, council, businesses etc.) 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Proverbs 21:1 and Jeremiah 11:7
5. **Pray for Military**: (All branches) Colossians 2:15, Isaiah 11:9 and Acts 2:21
6. **Pray for Marriages**: Matthew 19:6, Romans 12:21, Romans 5:5, Philippians 2:2 and Philippians 2:13
7. **Pray for Children**: 1 Peter 3:18, Ephesians 5:4, Galatians 3:13 and Jeremiah 29:11-13
8. **Pray for Singles & Seniors**: John 14:1, 1 John 4:19 and Hebrews 4:10
9. **Pray for Missionaries**: Psalm 146:7, Ephesians 6:10&16 and 3 John 2
10. **Pray for Finances**: (Impact, all projects, benevolence, etc.) Deuteronomy 26:1&3, Malachi 3:10 and Matthew 12:34
11. **Pray for Schools**: (All grade levels, college and grad school) Colossians 3:2, Philippians 2:15-16, Acts 16:31 and Jeremiah 1:12
12. **Pray for Outpouring of God's Spirit on All**: Joel 2:28, Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:4

Serve: Serving others can move us past an obligation and move us toward becoming the person God desires us to be. As we serve, we're being agents of change. We are participating in God's "Shalom", Peace. "Shalom" in the Hebrew is peace and the mission of God is to restore the brokenness that has taken place between us, each other, creation and God. God has restored every one of us and he invites us to be a part of His story to lead others to Him so that they may be restored as well.

This is why the Serve Experience is so important. The outcome is not just a focus on doing, but an emphasis of being. Imagine several LifeGroups serving one individual, several individuals or partnering with an organization to be the hands and feet of Jesus and demonstrate the love of the father through servanthood. Serving is more than checking off a checklist, it's a call to action and should ultimately be our way of life. *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* - Mark 10:45 ESV

As we serve others, be sure to lead and remind the members in your group that none of us are above anyone. God has no favorites. Jesus had every right to hold himself in high stature because he was made equal with God, yet he emptied Himself with humility to serve others. *"Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* - Philippians 2:6-8. Jesus gave up his own goals and desires to serve others and as followers of Christ, we have been called to do the same.

How you can Serve

- Cast vision for the timeframe and day your group will be serving. Ensure you and the group hold a focus of BEING over DOING.
- Guide your group and remind them of why we serve and of its importance to God. The following Scriptures will help to guide your group and create great discussion to prepare hearts for the serve experience. John 20:21, Ephesians 2:10, Mark 10:45, Philippians 2:6-8, John 13:13-15, Acts 1:8 and Matthew 28:18-20
- Utilize the list that's provided for you to partner with any non-profit organization.
- Consider serving someone you know personally (helping someone move, helping with a house project etc.)
- Serving the Homeless (Pack brown bag lunches, provide small bags of toiletries etc.)
- Get creative. If you or someone in your group has an idea to serve someone or a group of people, encourage it.

The goal isn't to do everything, but we need to do something. Do for one what you wish you could do for all.

Share your Story: Being able to share your story is a huge part of our walk with Christ. In fact, it's one of Jesus last commandments to what is referred to as "The Great Commission". Your story is the one message you're most qualified to preach.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit..." - Matthew 28:19

When Jesus says, "Go..." it's a call to action. To carry out the command of Jesus requires movement on our part. Encourage the members in your group and remind them how they came to Christ. Maybe someone invited them to church. Maybe they met someone in a public place and an individual shared their story with them. Maybe God met you right where you were in the middle of a crisis or surreal positive moment. However, it happened, something, someone or God went to you, so you could hear the gospel, give your life to Christ and live for Him. Remember to share your story with all people. Jesus reminds us that the gospel is for everyone and we must be willing to go outside our comfort zone and preferences to lead people to Christ. As we share our story, be reminded that Jesus is with you.

"...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." - Matthew 28:20

Remind your group that Jesus is with you always. He desires to empower you to fulfill the call He has placed over your life. Jesus also says you will be filled and led by the Holy Spirit (John 16:7 and 13-15). When Jesus calls us to action, He will never expect you to do it alone. There are some things that God calls us to do and it will seem impossible for us to fulfill. He is looking to do something so big and miraculous with you, in you and through you that it will require total dependence on God to get it done and He does that through the Holy Spirit.

The mission of LifePoint Church is, "To lead people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ". We lead people to Christ by sharing our story. It's ok if your story doesn't always lead people to Christ. Remember, we can't save anyone, only Jesus saves. The goal is for us to follow the leading and commands of Jesus because we love Him and are devoted to Him. That best reflects in our approach with those who are far from God. If we are faithful to Jesus, He will be faithful to us and use us for His glory and partner with us to lead others back to a relationship with Him.

How to Share your Story

- Remind people in you group the importance of building a relationship with people and investing in them. This helps get individuals comfortable when sharing their story. Start with a co-worker, neighbor, family member, friend or anyone the Lord lays on your heart.

- Practice sharing your story with each other in your group with a minimum of two to three minutes. This gives everyone an opportunity to work through their delivery and get comfortable in sharing how they came to Christ.
- Remind and ask people in your group how they came to Christ. Use those experiences as an encouragement when sharing your story with others.
- Encourage everyone to talk about the importance of inviting the Holy Spirit to be a part of how you share your story.
- Discuss in your group challenges or concerns you have in sharing your story and how you can overcome it.

Some Questions to Ask When Engaging Others

1. *Do you ever think of spiritual things?*

95% of people believe in a form of God. 1 out of 3 believe in a different kind of God. You can respond with, "*I think of spiritual things all the time. Those thoughts motivated me down that path to find out more of Christ. Can I share with you what happened to me?*"

2. *How would you describe your relationship with God?*

Learn to **LISTEN** without Judgement. If you feel like you live under the feeling of someone judging you, you don't feel safe or cared for. Learn to love them regardless of their answer. Don't feel like you have to protect God's reputation. Needs and Sin are different from each other. It's ok to share those needs because everyone has them. You can respond with, "*I do have needs. I have a great big god and he helps me to meet them.*"

3. *I know you've been going through a difficult time, would you mind if I pray for you?*

Be sensitive to their situation and don't embarrass them. If you can pray for them right now, do it. You don't need to be elegant, just be sincere. Don't be long winded, learn to be short (they'll be glad of that). Pray in Jesus name, so they know exactly who you are praying to.

4. *Where do you feel, think or believe you are on your spiritual journey in life?*

Ask on a Scale of 1-10 and discern how to connect their answer to your story.

5. *I have made some mistakes myself and then I became a Christian. Can I tell you about it?*

You don't relate to people by common circumstances, you relate to people by common need.

6. How do you think, believe or feel becoming a Christian would change your life?

Find out peoples "Value System". Your relationship with the Lord is not based on the "Do's" and "Don'ts" but based on a relationship with Christ similar to a healthy relationship with another individual.

7. Is there one thing in your life that sometimes makes you think about needing God?

Doesn't matter if they are up and out, or down and out. Everyone needs Jesus and this may be your opportunity to share your story.

8. Would you like to know the difference between Religion and Christianity?

Suggested Response: Religion is Man's search for God. Christianity is God's search for man. All other religions are about us working our way to God. Christianity shows us that God worked His way to through human form and His name is Jesus. *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* - **Mark 10:45**

9. What do you believe about Jesus?

Listen and don't be offended by their answer. If you don't understand something about what they share, ask for them to elaborate and hear what they have to say. Learn to ask good follow up questions so you are able to better understand them. Once you feel you have a good understanding as to how they view Jesus, ask them, *"Can I share with you what I believe about Jesus?"* and share your story. *"You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak."* - **James 1:19 NLT**

10. Do you have any church, spiritual or religious background?

This gives you their background and a little bit of their history, so you can better understand them and where they are coming from. *"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."* - **Philippians 2:4**