



## Introduction

This is the second week we're devoting our small group time to praying together through God's Word. As a church family, we've committed to pursue 20 days of fasting and prayer. This week is a great opportunity to share with each other how you're doing. If you're struggling, remember: Small group is a place for help and hope (and prayer!). We aren't strong on our own, we need God—that's why we pray! John Newton wrote, "We are never more safe, never have more reason to expect the Lord's help, than when we are most sensible that we can do nothing without Him."<sup>1</sup>

Hebrews 12:1–2 says, "Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith." As you come together this week, remember to keep your eyes on Jesus, not on yourself as you pursue him in fasting and prayer.

## Before Your Small Group Meeting

- Read Jude 17–25.
- Ask God to prepare your heart to pray together as a group.

## Group Discussion and Prayer

Just like last week, we want to spend the bulk of our small group time praying together. **We will alternate between discussion as a whole group and praying together in smaller groups.** You will briefly discuss the questions below which are based on the Scripture texts from the 20 Days of Fasting and Prayer Guide ([summitchurch.com/prayer](http://summitchurch.com/prayer)). The discussion will lead you to pray together in smaller groups. We recommend that groups split up into groups of three or four during the prayer times.

**Remember that we want to maximize our time in corporate prayer, so please limit the discussion to a maximum of five minutes per question.** The purpose of the discussion is to lead you to be

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<sup>1</sup> John Newton, *The Works of John Newton, Volume 2* (London: Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1824), 146. As quoted in Tony Reinke's *Newton on the Christian Life: To Live Is Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 234.

deliberate and thoughtful in your prayer time. The hope is that as you consider God's Word together, you will be moved to go to him in prayer, trusting his promises to listen and answer you.

### **Discuss**

1. Let's have a few of us share what God is teaching us through 20 Days of Fasting and Prayer. Feel free to share a verse as you talk about the Holy Spirit's work in your heart. Share any challenges you've had so we can pray for one another.

2. Read Jude 24–25. What do we learn about God in these verses? How do these truths prompt us to trust him and rely on him in prayer?

*Now to him who is able to protect you from stumbling and to make you stand in the presence of his glory, without blemish and with great joy, <sup>25</sup> to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority before all time, now and forever. Amen. (CSB)*

### **Pray**

Break up into smaller groups of three or four. Take some of the insights from Jude and pray together for seven minutes. Ask God to give us hearts that assign all glory, majesty, power, and authority to him alone.

### **Discuss**

3. Read Ephesians 4:1–6. What is Paul urging the readers to do?

*Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, <sup>2</sup> with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, <sup>3</sup> making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. <sup>4</sup> There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling—<sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism, <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.*

### **Pray**

Break up into smaller groups of three or four. Take seven minutes to pray. Ask God to make us a congregation that is humble, gentle, and patient. Pray that as we bear with one another in love, God would maintain the unity of the Spirit. Ask God to give our church a sense of unity in Christ and not in our nationality, economic status, race, gender, or any other thing.

### **Discuss**

4. Read Colossians 4:2–4. What are we supposed to devote ourselves to? What is Paul's specific prayer request for himself to the Colossians?

*Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, <sup>4</sup> so that I may make it known as I should.*

### **Pray**

Break up into smaller groups of three or four. Ask God to use the 20 days of fasting and prayer to make us a church that is *devoted* to prayer. Pray he would keep us alert and thankful. Ask God to continue to open a door for his Word.

### **Discuss**

5. Does anyone have any verses that God has used to encourage and strengthen them this week? Let's spend a few minutes and pray specifically for how God is speaking to us in this small group.

### **Pray**

Break up into smaller groups of three or four. As we close this time, take seven minutes to pray the specific verses God is putting on your hearts as a small group. What do you want God to do this year in your group? How can you depend on him more than ever this year?

## A Closing Encouragement

As you close, consider reading this quote from Augustine on prayer. Let the truth that God regards all of your tears (Psalm 56:8) be an encouragement for you to run to him in prayer.

Prayer is to be free of much speaking (Matthew 6:7), but not of much entreaty, if the fervor and attention persist. To speak much in prayer is to transact a necessary piece of business with unnecessary words. But to entreat much of Him whom we entreat is to knock by a long-continued and devout uplifting of the heart (Luke 18:1, 7).

In general, this business of prayer is transacted more by *sighs* than *by speech* (Romans 8:26), more *by tears* than *by utterance* (Psalm 126:5-6).

But He sets our tears in His sight (Psalm 56:8) and our groaning is not hidden from Him (Psalm 38:9) who created all things by His Word and who does not need human words.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Augustine of Hippo, "Letter 130 (A.D. 412)" in *Letters, Volume 2 (83-130)*, Trans. Wilfrid Parsons (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press: 1953/2008), 391.