

Preparing for LifeGroup

1. Prepare for each LifeGroup session by praying for:
 - A. Each group member
 - B. That God would make His Word (the Bible) clear to people in the group.
 - C. That God will help you as you lead
2. Personally prepare for the LifeGroup Discussion by:
 - A. Reading through this LifeGuide and becoming familiar with the content.
 - B. Make sure you take time to read and study the Scripture that is used in this LifeGuide.
3. Create a positive LifeGroup Environment by:
 - A. Serving Food! (Snacks or a meal – rotate who provides) - *optional
 - B. Arranging the seating where everyone can see everyone's face
 - C. Setting the room temperature @ 69 degrees (cold keeps them awake)
 - D. Placing pets in another room
 - E. Supervising and placing children in a remote room
 - F. Keeping room bright with natural and artificial lighting
 - G. Having light/fun music playing (low to medium sound volume)
 - H. Having pens available
 - I. Keeping extra Bibles on hand
 - J. Making sure everyone knows each other
 - K. Making sure you don't go too long. (Try aiming for 30 minutes of fellowship at the beginning and 1 hour of group time.)

Now you are ready for group time!

LifeGuide for Seven – Communication

Ice Breakers

Use one or more of the following “Ice Breakers” to get them talking:

- A. *Do you enjoy talking on the phone? Why or why not?*
- B. *What’s the hardest conversation you’ve had in the last year?*
- C. *What do you enjoy talking about over dinner with friends?*

Leader Tips:

Remember that the purpose of the ice breakers is to get everyone involved and ready to talk. Try to make this a natural transition into your Bible study time.

Setting the Stage

Leaders: The purpose of “setting the stage” is to effectively transition from the icebreakers to a discussion of the current weekend message. This section reminds everyone in your group of the overall theme and purpose of the sermon series, and gets their minds prepared for the subject matter.

Micah has started a new sermon series on relationships called Seven. Lawyers in California came up with the top seven reasons why marriage relationships end in divorce. There is no doubt that relationships are difficult and we need help to understand how to make them last. Good thing we have the Bible to help guide us in through the relationship challenges in our lives. God wants us to have meaningful relationships that bring Him the glory that He deserves. Our marriage relationships paint a beautiful picture of God’s love and redemption through the person of Jesus Christ.

This sermon series will provide much needed help for married couples and good foundational truth for singles. God’s Word speaks with authority and power to the challenge of making marriage relationships last a lifetime. We hope this series encourages each of you to work hard to make your marriage relationships God honoring. You will not be able to do it alone, but with the help of God’s Spirit speaking through His Word, you will have everything that you need.

Discussion Time

Leaders: Let me take a moment to make you aware of the content found in each LifeGuide, and how you can use it. Remember this is a “guide” so you should not feel compelled to read every word and follow it in perfect order. Basically, I want this guide to provide you Scripture that you can read and study together, explanation and commentary, and discussion questions to get the group talking. The questions are bulleted so that you can locate them easily. The guide does provide you with a general flow for the evening, but you are free to adapt the guide to the needs of your group. You are always welcome to call or email me if you have any questions. Please don't feel like you are bothering me. It's my pleasure and my job to help you.

Have someone in your group read James 1:19.

*Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.
(James 1:19)*

No Communication = No Relationship

1. Listen More

I don't listen because . . .

I am selfish.

I assume I already know.

I am preparing my speech.

A good listener seeks to understand.

*He who answers before listening - that is his folly and his shame.
(Proverbs 18:13)*

- Fill in the blank: I find it difficult to listen when I'm _____.
- Which of the reasons for not listening mentioned above do you struggle with the most?
- How do modern communication devices like cell phones, computers and televisions affect our ability to listen to each other?
- Can you tell when your spouse or significant other is not really listening to you?
- What time of the day are you most likely to be a good listener?
- How can you become a better listener?
- Prayer is both talking and listening to God. How much time do you spend each week listening to God?
- How do our listening skills in prayer affect our listening skills in other relationships?

2. Talk Less

A man of knowledge uses words with restraint. (Proverbs 17:27a)

When you talk - be clear.

When you talk - be encouraging.

When you talk - be nice.

Let your conversation be always full of grace. (Colossians 4:6a)

- Is talking too much a struggle for you? Why or why not?
- How do you think birth order and family background affects your amount of talking?
- Have your group members share encouraging words with each other.
- Why is it awkward and difficult to share encouraging words with each other?
- If you are a talker, how can you work on not dominating the conversations?
- Now being “slow to speak” does not mean you don’t have to speak. Why is it important for each person in the relationship to actually talk?
- How do TV shows and movies affect the way we view communication between husband and wife?

3. Calm Down

Better a patient man than a warrior, a man who controls his temper than one

who takes a city. (Proverbs 16:32)

- Why do married couples sometimes get angry over the smallest of things?
- What are some things that you do to help calm yourself down during an argument?
- How does anger damage the way we speak to each other?
- Why is it important not to go to bed angry?
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Assignment:

For Couples: Listen and talk (7 minutes each)

For Everyone: Communicate with God each day for the next 7 Days.

Cast all your anxiety on him because He cares for you. (1 Peter 5:7)

Wrap Up

Sum up the lesson by re-capping the main point and challenge the group to apply the truth to their life this week.

1. Ask for praise reports from previous prayer requests
2. Ask for prayer requests
3. Ask each person (or couple) to volunteer for part of next week’s meal/snack.
4. Make any announcements
5. Close with prayer and praise

☺ Let me know if you have any questions.

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