

Share, Read, Talk, Pray, Bless

A simple framework for building community and growing in Christian faith.

Step One: Share personal highs and lows. Or, ask, what gave me joy and what took away joy today? What was life giving, and what was depleting? This is meant to take some time. Accept some silence. Be ready for quiet thoughts, relaxed breathing. Some *slow-down time*. It is indeed, what we all need.

(Can't think of personal items to share? Use headlines from the news and teach empathy and compassion for the broader world).

**** BELL ****

Step Two: Read a verse from your Bible. Today, verses are provided from a book, *Affirmations from the Heart of God* by Bridget Meehan. Once you have these verses, sit with them and savor them. Put your name in the verse and imagine that God is speaking just to you. Take some time to read the scripture and let it read you.

**** BELL ****

Step Three: Talk about how the verse relates to the highs and lows that you identified earlier. Unpack the verse a bit. What does it mean in your own words? How might it relate to where you are today in your highs and lows? This is not inductive Bible study, but a simple reflecting and connecting practice.

**** BELL ****

Step Four: Pray for one another's highs and lows, for your family and for the world. Simply talk to God, thank Jesus for the good and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in specific problems.

**** BELL ****

Remember... there are many ways to pray. Some folks like to use their voices. Others may want to draw, doodle, sing, lay hands, take a walk or sit in silence. Before you decide that your group will pray aloud, ask if anyone would like to try another way of prayer.

Step Five: Bless one another. Trace the sign of the cross on one another's forehead or palm as a reminder that you belong to God and to one another. Bless one another as you sit in a circle. Use each other's name. Customize the blessing according to what you have heard the person share or what the group has experienced. *Example:*

Jess, bless you as you begin your new job and may God offer you calm in the midst of your worries.

**** BELL ****

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I have called you by name and you are mine. Isaiah 43.1

You are precious in my sight, you are honored, and I love you. Isaiah 43.4

“It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit.” John 15.16

“Ask and receive so that your joy may be complete.” John 16.24

“Don’t let your hearts be distressed, do not be fearful. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you.” John 14.26-27

God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. 2 Timothy 1.7

If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you. James. 1.5

Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. Romans 8.26

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12.2

Then Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.” John 8.31-32

“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 13.34-35