

## Leading a Small Group Discussion

### 1. Prepare

Work through the materials and think yourself into your group meeting.

### 2. Pray

Pray before your group meeting.

### 3. Don't talk too much

Your job is to get people thinking and talking and keep the discussion moving from member to member rather than talking to the members.

### 4. Be A Good Listener

So simple yet so hard to do. Don't just listen to what people are saying – actively listen. The best leaders listen with their eyes and ears.

### 4. Don't Answer Your Own Questions

The whole purpose of asking the question is to create an environment where group members feel safe to share. It's not about getting the right answer. When people are silent with some of these questions, embrace the silence: this might be where the introverts are thinking, and the Holy Spirit is speaking!

### 5. Encourage Responses

If no one really speaks you could say something like, "Paul, you look like you were going to say something..."

### 6. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions help group members to say more than a simple yes or no. Use 'what?' or 'how?' questions to get people to open up.

### 7. Try To Involve Everyone

Your group might be too big if everyone isn't able to speak their thoughts. Groups of over eight members will have difficulty doing this. In those cases, it might be best to divide the group into smaller groups for some of the time.

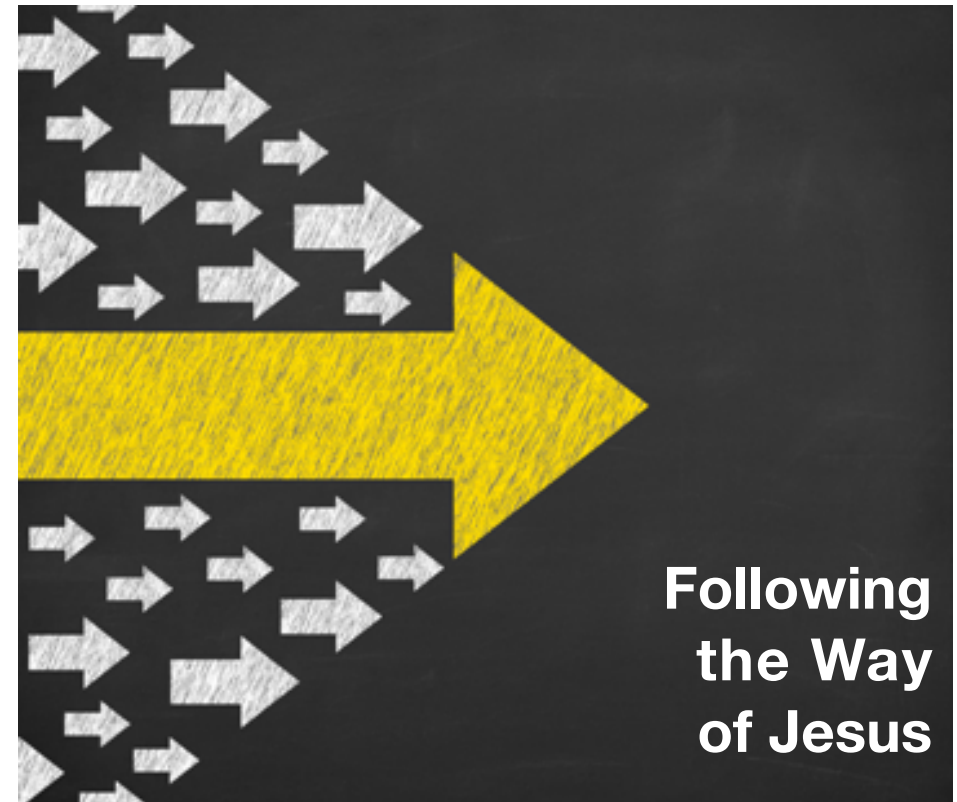
### 8. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing!

Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

### 9. Manage the Time

Keep an eye on the clock. Don't let things get bogged down in interesting but irrelevant discussion. Bring things back on track and take the initiative to move things on when it feels right.

### 10. Leave time for application.



## The way of prayer

Discussion Guide for Small Groups

## WAY IN

- Christians can feel some what guilty about prayer. Either not enough prayer or not very 'good' at it (whatever that means). The upshot can be that we feel like giving up. Share your experience of prayer - the joy and the struggles.

## READ

- Luke 18: 1 - 8

## KEY TEXT

- Luke 18: 1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

## DISCUSS

- The context in which Jesus told this parable and the one that follows it are the prophetic words that he had spoken in the previous chapter. Read chapter 17: 20 - 37.

Reflect on the call to pray and importantly pray persistently in times of trouble. Share how prayer has been a strength in troubled times.

Today many Christian brothers and sisters around the world are being

persecuted for their faith in Christ. Spend a few minutes praying for them.

- Jesus was not drawing a direct comparison between the Judge and God (V2). Rather they are presented as counter opposites.

How does our view of who God is effect our prayer?

Jesus often withdrew to pray, e.g. read Mark 1:35; Matt 14:23; Luke 5:16. We don't know what he said on these occasions but he went to pray. Why was this so important. Reading Matt 1: 9-11 might give some insight.

How does prayer feel different when it is not so much focused on outcomes but rather on relationship with a loving and generous Father?

- The way that the woman addressed the judge was simple and direct, from the heart and honest (Luke 18: 3).

The Psalms are full of honest prayers. E.g. read Psalm 142.

What might prevent us from honestly sharing our concerns and worries with God?

How might beginning with pray that expresses ones heart 'clear-the-way' for other types of prayer

- Persistent prayer, according to this parable is fixed in the hope that God will vindicate his people (Luke 18: 7-8).

Explore the tension between having 'needs' met now and our eternal hope that all things shall be renewed.

## WAY OUT

Try keeping prayer, **Simple**, which is focusing on relationship with God before outcomes. **Honest** - bring your own voice and life to God and **Going**, persistently praying for God's kingdom to come.

**Commentary.** Luke 18:1-8 contains a parable and an application that continue the theme of Jesus' return. The application of the parable in verses 7-8 keeps our focus on the attitude we should have about his return. This section is unique to Luke and is one of the most entertaining of Jesus' parables. It portrays the importance of prayer for God's vindication of the saints. If they minister in a world that will not accept them, how should they handle the injustice of that rejection? The answer comes in a call to pray persistently without losing heart. It is another way to call for enduring faith...It is important to maintain faith in the light of patiently awaiting his return. What makes this parable so effective are its two characters, with whom it is easy to identify. The widow who needs help represents a person helpless in the society, whose only appeal for justice comes from the authority of the judge. Though we probably think of her as an older women, in the ancient world a widow could be as young as in her thirties. She is seeking justice and appeals to a judge for help. This likely involves some type of vindication involving money. The woman is persistent, a quality Jesus makes exemplary in the story. The judge does not fear God or respect people. He is a fiercely independent man and represents, in a contrasting manner, the potential for God to respond to the cries for justice from his people. Jesus' argument goes that if a judge, who is no respecter of persons, hears the cry of the widow, how much more will a compassionate God hear the cries of his people!

Bock, Darrell L.. Luke: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life (p. 454). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.