

## 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.

Make sure people have time to think about the difference that this discussion will have in their daily 'frontline' lives.



## 6. Jesus: Man of Prayer

(Mark 1:32-39)

## WAY IN

What has been the most useful piece of advice you have ever received about prayer?

### Key Text: Mark 1:35

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.

### Read Mark 1:32-39

## DISCUSS

1. Look at these instances of Jesus at prayer. What do we learn about prayer from each of them?
  - I. Mark 1:35-39
  - II. Luke 3:21,22
  - III. Mark 3:13-19
  - IV. Mark 6:45-46 (note preceding and following stories)
  - V. Mark 9:14-29 (what is the connection between being “a faithless generation” v19, and a failure to pray (v29)?
  - VI. Mark 14:32-42

2. “Jesus frequently withdrew to lonely places to pray” (Luke 5:16). What is the value of a habit like this? Where is your ‘lonely place’?
3. Bearing in mind your discussion thus far, try to summarise what you have learned about *the purpose and practice* prayer.
4. On a personal level, what have you found:
  - I. that helps you pray.
  - II. that hinders you from praying.
4. If you were responsible for mentoring a new Christian, how would you teach them how to pray?

## WAY OUT

How could the group support one another in developing deeper lives of prayer?

Pray for one another.

### Commentary Notes: Mark 1:35-39

(2) The second point of interest is the reference to Jesus’ praying. In Mark’s Gospel Jesus is seen in prayer only three times: at the beginning of the account, when his ministry is being defined (Ch. 1:35), in the middle after the feeding of the five thousand (Ch. 6:46), and near the conclusion when Jesus is in Gethsemane (Ch. 14:32–42). These three occasions have the character of a critical moment. The setting for Jesus’ prayer in each instance is night and solitude, for even in Gethsemane Jesus is quite alone in spite of the three disciples who are separated a short distance from him.<sup>135</sup> The situation again recalls the wilderness when Jesus confronts the temptation of Satan, and is sustained by help from God. His strength is in prayer through which he affirms his intention to fulfill the will of God, which means his submission to the judgment of God on behalf of the many who return to the wilderness without understanding....

Jesus’ answer indicates their failure to understand him or his mission. Acts of healing and expulsion of demons, as much as proclamation, entailed a disclosure of the nature of the kingdom of God and constituted a demand for decision. By his decision a person was qualified for participation in the kingdom or marked for judgment. The crowds that gathered in Capernaum had made their decision, but it could not be the appropriate one because it involved not repentance but attraction to Jesus as a performer of miracles. That is why Jesus interrupts the miracles to go elsewhere to proclaim “the gospel of God.”

Lane, William L.. The Gospel of Mark (p. 82). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.. Kindle Edition.