

BLESS – Begin with Prayer

Welcome and opening prayer

Introductions of one another (5 mins)

- To open your discussion and get to know one another more, go around the group and share your name, and what food you like to eat with chocolate?
- Share one thing that you feel “blessed” from today or this week.

Introduction to BLESS (15 mins)

God’s heart has always been to bless people. Read Genesis 12:1-3.

- What is distinctive about the blessing God promised to Abraham?

BLESS is a set of simple practices that help us to share blessing with those around us. Watch “5 ways to Bless Your Neighbours” by Dave Ferguson at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMpUSDKPU4s>

- What is your response to BLESS? Do you have any questions or comments about it?

- Which aspects of BLESS do you think you would come easily to you, and which are more challenging?

Sometimes God calls us to bless people in our existing networks and neighbourhoods. Sometimes God sends us to a new neighbourhood or calls us to get involved in a new network in order to be a blessing.

- What existing neighbourhoods, networks or relationships are you a part of where God may be inviting you to be a blessing?

- What new neighbourhoods, networks or relationships might God be inviting you to or sending you to in order to be a blessing?

“Begin with Prayer” Bible Study (20 mins)

Read Luke 10:1-11 and then read verse 2 again.

- Why do you think Jesus began his instruction to his disciples by urging them to pray?

- What else do you notice in this passage that resonates with BLESS?

- What do you learn about how Jesus would have you follow him from this passage?

BLESS begins with prayer – praying for our friends, families, colleagues and neighbours we relate to, and listening in prayer for God’s dreams for our neighbourhoods and how we can cooperate. We want to pray God’s blessing for people around us, but also ask, “God how do you want me to work with you to bless the people and community around me?” Beginning with prayer reminds us that any mission is not firstly up to us, but about discerning what God is doing in people’s lives.

As a model for how to pray and for what, read Matthew 6:9-13.

- Select a line of this prayer and explain how you could use it to Begin with Prayer for your neighbourhood or network.

Pray with Someone (20 mins)

Our goal this week is to begin with prayer for our neighbourhoods, networks and relationships. Praying for people is foundational to following Jesus’ example of blessing people, foundational to inviting God to bless people and foundational to opening ourselves up to be a blessing in cooperation with God.

- What do you find easy and/or hard about praying for others and for your neighbourhood?

- Where in your church life and neighbourhood activity might you create space to begin with prayer?

- Who, where and what might God be inviting you to pray for in the week ahead?

- How can we help one another in beginning with prayer?

Prayer – (10 mins)

Pray with one another about the people and situations on your heart, and about the neighbourhoods, networks and people where God has placed you or is sending you.

Close by praying the Lord’s Prayer together and thinking about the situations on your heart. Use one or both of these:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
For yours is the kingdom and the
power and the glory forever.
Amen.

Exercise before the next session: Over the coming week take a prayer walk around your neighbourhood. Pray for your neighbours, the people who serve you in shops and deliveries, the people who serve your community in other ways. Seek to discern how God views your neighbourhood and what God is doing in your neighbourhood. Pray that God would help you be a blessing where God has placed you.

BLESS Promise

In order to be a blessing I want to commit to....

Begin with prayer.

I will pray (how often?) _____ for _____
