



CELEBRATION COMMUNITY GUIDE

for April 24, 2022

Part of the mission of our church is to awaken people to Christ and His message and equip them to practice their faith in real life. One way we do this at Celebration is through Communities.

Church is more than a one-hour gathering on a Sunday morning. Church is also a community gathering around a table, doing life together the other six days of the week.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Celebration Communities are an opportunity for our church family to live in a deep web of relationships. We eat together, pray for one another, and practice the way of Jesus in Brantford and the surrounding areas.

As you read through this week's guide, remain centered around these purposes:

Love God

Learn the ways of Jesus

Live with purpose

The following guide is meant to help direct your time together. These are best practices and *not* a rigid set of instructions to follow.

GUIDED COMMUNITY DISCUSSION

Gather as a group in a comfortable setting. Your Celebration Community leader will lead a brief time of prayer at the beginning, asking the Holy Spirit to lead and guide your time together. Take time to be silent before you begin. It's important to declutter our minds so that we may focus on one another and God's presence. Pray the ancient prayer: 'Come, Holy Spirit'. Work through this week's guided questions:

(1) What brought me joy this week?

(2) Where did I notice God's presence?

(3) Was there anything God revealed to me?

(4) Looking at the chart below, which of the following things do I tend to envy most? Somewhat? A little? Not at all?

Those with more money	Those with more education	Those with stronger families
Those with nicer housing	Those with better health	Those with a rewarding career
Those with more talent	Those with a strong voice	Something else

(5) How often do I find myself comparing my life to others? What damage might this being doing to me?

(6) Being as specific as I can be, what can I do this week to seek God's wisdom? Can I commit to doing something *right now*?

PRACTICE THE WAY

As humans, we face the tension between envy and contentment. We live in a culture where we constantly compare ourselves to others. This is often a barrier that prevents us from fully celebrating and enjoying the gifts of God. One famous Proverb says this:

"A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones." (Proverbs 14v30)

Envy destroys our capacity to live well in community and get along with others.

To help fight the pull towards envy, we lean into the practices of Jesus. Most important of these is devoting ourselves to a life of prayer. As we think and pray about the people we resent or compare ourselves to in unhealthy ways, it will change us and the power these individuals hold over us. Who can you pray for this week?

However, another important action we can take is in serving others. This cultivates channels for developing empathy for others.

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the needs around you today. Who might God be nudging you towards or have placed in your path to serve and love the way Jesus would serve and love them?

Write down a list of people close to you who you have frequently compared yourself to. Pray for the people on this list this week. What would happen if God's will for their life came true? Go a step further and take a moment this week to serve them in some shape or form. Give your resources, time or money to blessing them. It can be as simple as buying them a cup of coffee or as special as inviting them over for dinner.

PRAY TOGETHER

Spend time together in conversation with God.

Ask yourself before praying:

(1) What has God revealed to me this past week?

(2) Where is God inviting me to meet Him this upcoming week?

(3) What can I do this week to plant peace in a relationship or situation that has been troubling me?

(4) What should I be guarding my heart from this week?

Your leader will begin praying for individuals in the group. Take turns praying for each member. If everyone in your group is comfortable with laying hands on each other, feel free to do so.

If this is your first time in a Celebration Community, and you don't feel comfortable sharing something or praying out loud, feel free to be silent. Your Community is an opportunity and space where you can grow. You're welcome and safe here.

THE WEEK AHEAD

As you live out the rest of your week, consider what has been shared during your time together.

Ask yourself:

Who has God placed in my life to pray for and encourage?

What can I ask my Community to keep me accountable for next time we meet?

As a Community, we encourage you to continue planning a significant act of service within your neighborhood or city. Take time to read through our booklet for this project, creating a concrete plan for your group to pray about and execute together by this summer.

For more information on this initiative, ask your Community leaders or head to the Resources page at happychurch.ca.

