



CELEBRATION COMMUNITY GUIDE

for March 20, 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) What false promises do wealth, money and "stuff" bring people?
- (5) How do these false promises misalign with life in the Kingdom with Jesus?
- (6) How should my relationship with Jesus change my relationship with money? Where might Jesus be calling me this week to an increasing awareness and intentionality in regard to the money and resources I have?

PRACTICE THE WAY

SIMPLICITY | A spiritual discipline of the Christian faith, simplicity often goes by the names "simple living" or "minimalism". Simplicity is the act of not only decluttering our closets but decluttering our lives.

Richard Foster once said that "simplicity is an inward reality that results in an outward lifestyle."

Simplicity is first reflected in the inward architecture of our hearts as we grow and begin to receive what we have as a gift from God, cared for by God, meant to be shared with others.

When we begin to live this inwardly, the result is an outward lifestyle where we choose to leverage our time, money, talents and resources towards other people's needs and what matters most in the world.

Biblically, simplicity is a practice that is entirely based on the life of Jesus. Though Jesus wasn't entirely poor (he was supported by a group of wealthy donors who were mostly upper-class women), he happily lived in the tension of enjoying good meals and yet warning about what money could do to our hearts. For us in the West, we live with that same tension. We can be grateful and enjoy nice things, but must, in the words of Richard Foster, live with "a carefree unconcern for possessions."

PRACTICE THE WAY

There are many next steps for those looking to live a more simplified lifestyle. However, here are some practical ways we can fuse a lifestyle of simplicity with that of a lifestyle of generosity:

(I) We can share our resources

Why buy something when we can share resources amongst our community? Not only can we look for opportunities to save money by borrowing items, but we can share the resource that we ourselves already own with those who could benefit from or need them.

(II) We can make a habit of giving things away

Jesus said that it is "more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20v35). If you find yourself downsizing or getting rid of items, actively find people who could use the things you're parting with. If you don't have items to give, maybe you could set up a blessing fund in your monthly budget as a way of sharing money with the people around us.

(III) We can live on a budget

Money can be squandered and go to all the wrong places. A budget doesn't just help us stay out of debt but allows us to be creative with where our money is going. Often, the first step to generosity is being more intentional with where our money is being spent in the first place.

(IV) We can buy less things

Our culture encourages us to ask "how do I get more?" However, the disciple of Jesus should be asking "how can I live with less?". When we choose to buy fewer, better things, or simply consider purchasing used items, we can save money that is better used elsewhere. A question we should all ask before purchasing items is: "do I actually need this?"

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) Where is God inviting me to be generous with my time, resources and money?

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.

