

# unanswered prayer

**CELEBRATION COMMUNITY GUIDE**

for February 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?

In "desert" seasons or a "dark night of the soul", God Himself may intentionally withdraw the felt-sense of His presence to do work in us and prepare us for deeper intimacy with Him?

- (4) Am I in a "desert" season, or a "dark night of the soul"? How do I feel?
- (5) Have I been through a "desert" season, or a "dark night of the soul"?  
What did God do in my life through it?
- (6) How could a season like this be key to our spiritual formation?

# PRACTICE THE WAY

If anyone in your Community identifies with the dark night, spend time letting them share (use questions 4-6 from "Guided Community Discussion" to structure this time), have the Community spend time praying for those in that season.

If no one in your group feels like they are in a "desert" season or a "dark night of the soul", spend time asking the Holy Spirit to grow and mature your Community in His timing and His way.

Before you pray, take 5 minutes to sit silently together. Pray the ancient prayer "Come, Holy Spirit", taking a posture of receiving. Listen to what God may be revealing to you or your Community.

As you pray for one another, keep in mind:

- (1) We are not trying to "fix" people with things they can do differently or provide a spiritual pep talk. Be quick to listen and slow to speak.
- (2) Don't pray for God to take them out of the dark night, but through it.
- (3) Empathize and speak truth over them.
- (4) Hold them up before God.

# PRAY TOGETHER

Spend time together in conversation with God.

Ask yourself before praying:

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

(2) Where is God inviting me to meet Him in my pain, this week?

(3) What story might God not be done writing in my life?

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?**

Also, we're inviting our Communities to participate in Fasting and Prayer Wednesdays throughout the months of February and March.

We recommend people start simple if they've never done this before by fasting from sunrise to noon. If you practiced fasting before, feel free to try fasting from sunrise to sunset (with a late dinner) or a 24-hour fast when you're ready. Each time you feel hungry, let this prompt you towards prayer. Use this time you would normally eat to listen to and speak with God.

We will have prayer opportunities on-site each Wednesday. Please reach out via social media or email if you're interested in joining us for in-person prayer.

