



CELEBRATION COMMUNITY GUIDE

for March 13, 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 role has the Bible played in shaping me?

(4) What does my practice of reading the Bible look like right now? Am I intentional or unintentional about it?

(5) What difficulties do I face when it comes to reading the Bible? Are there any barriers standing in the way for me?

(6) What do I believe Jesus is inviting me to do through the practice of reading the Bible?

PRACTICE THE WAY

LECTIO DIVINA is an ancient method of Bible study, and a great next step for many of us searching to meet God in His Scriptures. Through this practice, we allow the Scriptures, along with the Holy Spirit, to lead us into further intimacy with God.

Lectio Divina consists of five distinct movements:

- (1) Preparing to meet with God
- (2) Reading
- (3) Reflection
- (4) Response
- (5) Rest

First, pick a time and a space to be silent and free from distractions.

Next, choose a passage from the Scriptures. We encourage you to start with the Gospels. Begin to read and move slowly through the following five steps:

(1) Preparing to meet with God: Turn your cellphone off and leave it in another room. Sit quietly, calming your body and your mind. If this is difficult, try concentrating on your breath and focusing on the image of Jesus. Next, take a posture of receiving, inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts, your imagination, and your feelings as you read the Bible.

PRACTICE THE WAY

(2) Read: Now, take your time reading the passage slowly. Do not rush. Pay attention to the words that catch your thoughts and imagination. If your mind is drawn to a specific word or image, stop and reflect on this for a minute. Pay close attention to the language being used.

(3) Reflect: Once you've finished the passage, return to the beginning and start again. Now, allow the text to connect with you on a personal level. Does something resonate with you? Does something apply to your season of life? Ask yourself:

"What do I need to **know** in light of this text?"

"What do I need to **do** in light of this text?"

"Who do I need to **be** in light of this text?"

(4) Respond: Speak with God about the passage. No matter what you are feeling (i.e.: confusion, sadness, anger, thankfulness, love, etc.), talk to God openly and honestly about your experience.

(5) Rest: Before continuing with your day, simply pause in God's presence. Worship, praise, express gratitude, or simply use this as a time to be still and hear from Him. Avoid the temptation to rush towards the next thing in your schedule.

If you're looking for a starting point, we invite you to begin with John 15v1-17.

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?

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.

