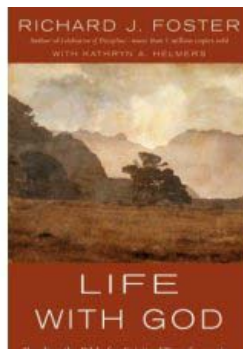


CIRCLE OF CARE GUIDE



Life With God Study

Week of August 2, 2009

Growing in Grace on the Journey Inward, Together and Outward

Circles of CARE are the primary way of being church at Crossroads. This is a place where we are transformed as we intentionally present ourselves to God and one another to grow in grace and love in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to serve our family, community, and world.

The Journey Inward

Circle participants are growing in grace through our daily inward journey as we seek to grow in our relationship with God through listening, prayer, scripture, self-examination, and meditation. The inward journey prepares us for the journey together with our Circle of CARE. It is through the Journey Inward and Together that we live the Journey Outward in our homes, community, and world and listen for God's ever deepening Call.

The Journey Together

Gathering & Centering "Be still and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10

Life With God – Throughout this summer we will be studying from Richard Foster's book, Life With God. As a way to prepare for Circle each week during your gathering time please select one of the following options:

Option 1: Please choose a mediation found on the Centering DVD. At the conclusion of the meditation please take a few minutes of silence and close with a spoken prayer. Centering DVDs can be picked up in the church front office.

Option 2:

Centering Leader: Take a few deep breaths to center yourself as we journey inward during this time of meditation, silence, and reflection. Read the scripture below. Come back and read it again and see what words or phrases seem to be speaking to you. Underline those words/phrases. Come back to the scripture for a third time and read it again slowly. I will close the silence with a spoken "Amen." (*Give the Circle about three minutes to do this exercise.*)

John 6:28-33 (New Living Translation)

²⁸ They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" ²⁹ Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." ³⁰ They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?" ³¹ After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.'" ³² Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven." ³³ The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Please read Life With God: Chapter 7 before coming to Circle

Life With God can be purchased via Amazon.com by clicking on the icon found on our church's homepage – www.ecrossroadsumc.org Next week we will be studying Chapter 8.

Reflection: "All scripture is given by God and is useful to teach us what is true and help us realize what is wrong in our lives...God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16

Leader – Think through all on your own and select at least two for group discussion.

"A Spiritual Discipline is an intentionally directed action, which places us in a position to receive from God the power to do what we cannot accomplish on our own." (RJF)

1. Do we truly want Life with God? The answer to this question will help us move from intention to action in our spiritual life. In what ways do you see yourself as an active partner in your relationship with God?
2. Read Galatians 3: 1 – 5; Spiritual Discipline is not about “getting a life with God” it is being open to a life with God. In our busy lives we may sometimes view Spiritual Practices as just one more thing we have to do. How can you adjust your daily agenda to leave more time for your relationship with God?
3. Do you think that enjoying the beauty of nature is a spiritual practice? Do you view looking into the eyes of a homeless person and having a conversation with him or her, as a spiritual practice? Discuss with your group experiences where you feel connected to God.
4. Galatians 5:1 reads, “Stand firm therefore and do not submit to a yoke of slavery.” As we close this part of our meeting, ask God to help each of us to start seeing discipline and accountability as positive, rewarding action words.

Accountability - *“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” James 5:16*

Please take a moment to consider the following accountability questions and provide an opportunity for individuals to respond if they so desire.

1. Are you aware of resisting God’s presence and guidance in any relationships or decisions you are facing?
2. Is there a temptation (power, prestige, possession, other) that you are struggling with and want to bring to the Circle?
3. Is there something specific for which you desire to be held accountable by the Circle?

The Prayer for One Another *“Stay alert and persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.” Ephesians 6:18*

During this time, the Circle members should share their individual concerns, struggles and praises, and then ask the group to pray for them during the coming week. Designate one member to write down the prayer requests and then distribute them to the group by e-mail the next day.

1. Share a word of gratitude for an experience of God’s grace this week.
2. Share a prayer request for yourself and other concerns you may have.

NEW MODEL FOR PRAYER REQUESTS

Crossroads Church Family Prayer Requests *“Pray in the spirit at all times and on every occasion.” Ephesians 6:18*

Prayer Leader: (Please pray out loud this prayer or your own spontaneous prayer)

Lord, Jesus, we remember that you call us to pray together for the needs of our local community and neighborhood. Hear our prayers as we speak them to you (Ask the Circle to share any prayer concerns they may have.)

Lord, Jesus, we remember our broken world. We pray for peace, reconciliation and hearts to turn to you and be healed. We lift these world concerns to you from our hearts. (Ask the Circle to lift up concerns around the world.)

Lord, hear us now as we join our individual voices as one and pray the prayer you taught. (Invite the Circle to pray the Lord’s Prayer together.) Amen.

Journey Outward

“Let your good deeds shine for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” Matthew 5:16

The journey outward reflects our desire to become Jesus’ presence in our family, community and world. It is part of our sacred rhythm and important to spiritual growth as is the journey inward (loving God and ourselves) and together (loving our neighbor).

- Spanish as a Second Language is a wonderful opportunity to have an immersion experience in learning basic Spanish. It is sponsored by Crossroads Latino and begins this fall. For more information email Freddy Arce at farcep@msn.com.
- Please remember our homeless friends at Franklin Square with food and presence during the summer. You may sign-up via email: foodandfellowship@ecrossroadsumc.org or on the board in the front hallway of the church.
- Grace Ministry will be collecting food and clothing on Friday, August 14th for distribution on Saturday, August 15th. Check with your neighbors who are having yard sales to see if you can pick up some summer clothes for children and store them in your home until August 14th. We also need Grace Servants for the summer. Our normal army of teens disappears during summer and we certainly could use the help setting up on Friday evening and serving on Saturday morning. Contact graceministries@ecrossroadsumc.org if you can serve.