



Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, we trust you are here with us now and we thank you for your presence. Help each of us to see where you are leading us. We want your best for our lives. Amen.

Talk It Over

This week we continued our series called 40 Days of Prayer. The goal of this series is to help us grow in our connection with God and to grow in our understanding of God's power through prayer. The hope is this series can help us find something fresh in our relationship and approach to God.

- What was your prayer life like this week? Remember, this isn't about right answers. Our time here is about being honest with where we are currently in hopes of growing in our faith and friendship.

Read Philemon 1:4-6 (NIV)

Each week of this series we are looking at a prayer Saint Paul prayed for people he knew and loved. In this specific prayer, we see Paul encouraging his friend (Philemon) to share his faith story more so that he and others may grow in their understanding of Christ.

Our pastorsaid it this way, "Sharing our faith with others and sharing the hope we have in Jesus with our friends, is the greatest spiritual momentum creator you will ever experience in your life. If you want positive spiritual momentum in your life, if you want to grow in your faith and know God more, then start sharing your faith, start praying for God opportunities to show and share his love."

- Did the idea of sharing your faith in order for you to understand more yourself resonate with you at first or is it something you feel resistant to? Why or why not?
- How might sharing our faith more help us understand more? What are some specific reasons Paul may have said this?
- Tell us about a time you shared your faith story and experienced spiritual momentum in your life.

This week we looked at these three possible reasons we may not share our faith story more often:

1. We are too busy.
 2. We don't want to be that weird person.
 3. We don't think or feel like we know enough.
- Of these three reasons for not sharing our faith more, which one do you most identify with this season? Tell us how this reason is manifesting itself in your life. If you have another reason, feel free to share that reason with us too.
 - Do you have specific examples where being too busy, not wanting to be that weird person, or not knowing enough stopped you from sharing your faith story? If so, tell us about it.

This week we also looked at three ways we can share our faith in simple, authentic, loving ways:

1. Live a life that is attractive. (When we say attractive, think of it this way: is your life reflecting love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.)
2. Invite people to church.

(Content continued on the next page.)

3. B.L.E.S.S. people where you live, work, and play. Here is a quick review of what B.L.E.S.S. means:

B – Begin in prayer: Start praying for the people in your three regular spaces of life (where you live, work, and play).

L – Listen: Every person you know is looking for someone who cares enough to listen. Listen to their hopes, dreams, pains, needs, challenges, and so forth. Jesus was a master of this, and we want to become people who listen to the needs of our community and friends.

E – Eat: Did you know eating is a spiritual practice? When you share a meal you're sharing life. Meals are a natural time we connect; in turn, conversations can organically shift to significant things and relationships are deepened.

S – Serve: We want to be a church that serves our city and blesses our city. We want to be people that serve our friends and bless our friends. We are never more like Jesus than when we serve. Look for ways to serve the people in your circles of life.

S – Story: After you've engaged in well rounded, authentic, loving relationships, you will be better equipped and positioned to see natural God created opportunities to share the Jesus story and your Jesus story.

The big idea behind all three big ideas we looked at here — live a life that is attractive, invite people to church, and B.L.E.S.S. people you live, work, and play with — is that there is nothing in our life that God has blessed us with, that he doesn't intend for us to share with others. Jesus changes our lives and he changes our eternity. And God desires to use us to help others know about his great love. We are not designed to be a grounder of God's blessing, but rather to be conduits and conductors of God's blessings.

- What idea or area from this section stood out to you as something you would like to see grow better at?
- In what ways are you being a conduit or conductor of God's blessing this season?
- Do you have any sense that you are being a grounder of God's blessing? If so, consider sharing what you are noticing, why do you think things are playing out that way, and how you might go about moving forward in a new way.
- Are there any specific people in your life you are currently, actively, trying to share your God story with? If so, tell us what you sense God has been asking of you and leading you towards.

Read Colossians 4:2-6 (NLT)

When we share our faith story, we get to be a part of God's divine story. God is always working and always wanting to move in the lives of people. We may simply be planting a seed, we may be someone that waters that seed, or we may be there at the harvest when the Gospel comes to life in them. No matter what part we play, it's a meaningful part. Furthermore, sharing our faith story empowers our faith to grow by getting us off the sidelines of the Jesus mission and right onto the frontlines of faith. Plus, as we share our faith story we are reminded of what God has done for us.

- Tell us about a time you were able to play a part in God's divine story for some else. Remember, it doesn't matter what part you played.
- Take a moment to consider what God has done for you this season. Share how have you seen God move in your life this season.

A Note to the Group Leader: Today's closing prayer comes with two options, pick the option that you feel fits your group best.

Closing Prayer Option One

God, thank you for inviting us to be a part of your divine plan. Help us to be aware of what you are doing in the lives of those around us and help us to be a blessing to those people. We want to live on mission with you; we want to be conduits and conductors of your love.

(Content continued on the next page.)

Closing Prayer Option Two (Instructions for the Group Leader)

Close today's group by inviting anyone who wants to pray, to pray. Tell the group you will be transitioning to a moment of silence and anyone is welcome to jump in and pray a simple prayer about the things that were discussed today when they are ready. Encourage your group to use this prayer time to pray for the ways they can share their faith with others. Use this time to pray for ways to be conduits of God's blessing; pray for ways to live on mission with Jesus. Maybe there are specific people they want to pray for. If there is silence between prayers, that is okay. Make sure the group knows this. The process does not need to be rushed or polished. Once it seems as if those who want to pray have prayed, be prepared to close the prayer time up by praying your own prayer or using the prayer listed under "Closing Prayer Option One".

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.