

LEADERSHIP
PAIN

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HOST'S GUIDE

This study guide is here to help you lead a fun and transformative eGroup study over the next few weeks that will see each person progress and grow. Use this guide, along with the DVDs and weekly Study Guides, for a life-changing, interactive experience.

BEFORE YOU MEET:

- Ask God to prepare the hearts and minds of the people in your eGroup. Ask Him to show each of you how to apply what you learn to your own heart to see growth and to move forward.
- Preview the DVD and read through the study guide for that week. Think about what you might answer for each question. Make notes in your study guide if you want to.

SETTING UP:

- Take time before everyone arrives to prepare some snacks to share with everyone, set up the room you will use, check that there are enough seats, and try to create a relaxed and comfortable environment to meet in. You might want to play music quietly to create a relaxed atmosphere when everyone arrives, or move the furniture in your living room to make the space inviting.
- Have a Bible handy for verses that you might want to look up during discussion.

HOW TO HOST YOUR GATHERING AND USE YOUR STUDY GUIDE:

ENGAGE: Welcome each person as they arrive. Spend time chatting, getting to know one another, or just sharing about the week. Your relationships as a group are as important as the time you spend watching the DVD or in discussion. A relaxed and friendly environment is an easy place to learn and hear from God.

RECAP: After the first session you may wish to spend a bit of time each week recapping how your last seven days has been, inviting members to share any opportunities they had throughout the week to apply what they learned and how their individual activation went.

WATCH: After you have spent some time engaging with each other watch the DVD for the week.

DISCUSS: Read out each question in the study guide, allowing time for everyone to share their thoughts or experiences if they desire.

When a question arises, ask the group for their input, and resist the urge to answer it yourself straight away. Your primary role is to create an environment where people feel comfortable to be themselves and participate, not to provide all the answers to all of their questions. Don't be afraid of silence as participants think of their response to the questions.

Remember, the goal is not necessarily to 'get through' all of the questions. The main priority is for each person to learn and engage in dynamic discussion.

PRAY: Ask the group to pray for each other from week to week, especially about key issues that arise during your discussion time. This is how you begin to build authentic relationship, and encourage spiritual growth within the group.

ACTIVATE: As a group, read out and talk about the action in the study guide for that week. Decide together to commit to doing this action during the week to help you each grow and engage with God individually.

SUGGESTED TIME FRAMES FOR YOUR GATHERING:

ENGAGE: 15 minutes

RECAP: 10 minutes

WATCH: 10 minutes

DISCUSS: 30 minutes

PRAY: 5-10 minutes

ACTIVATE: 5 minutes

(Please note that these are just suggested times, you may wish to take longer in certain areas. However, we do recommend keeping your gathering to a maximum of one and a half hours in consideration of others' time)

KEYS TO A DYNAMIC EGROUP

Relationships: Meaningful, encouraging relationships are the foundation of a dynamic eGroup. Discussion and prayer are important elements of a gathering, but the depth of each part is often dependent upon the depth of the relationships between members.

Availability: Building a sense of community within your group requires members to prioritise their relationships with one another. This means being available to listen, care for one another, and meet each other's needs.

Mutual Respect: Mutual respect is shown when members value others' opinions (even when they disagree) and are careful to never belittle or embarrass others in the group (including their spouses, who may or may not be present).

Openness: A healthy group environment encourages sincerity and transparency. Members treat each other with grace in areas of weakness, allowing each other room to grow.

Confidentiality: To develop authenticity and a sense of safety within the group, each member must be able to trust that things discussed within the group will not be shared outside the group.

Shared Responsibility: Group members will share the responsibility of gatherings by using their God-given abilities to serve at each meeting. Some may greet, some may prepare food, some may pray, etc. Ideally, each person should be available to care for one another as needed.

Sensitivity: Dynamic eGroups are born when the leader consistently seeks and is responsive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, following His leading throughout the meeting as opposed to sticking to the “agenda”. This is especially important during the discussion and prayer time.

Fun!

Dynamic gatherings take the time to have fun! Create an atmosphere for fun, and be willing to laugh at yourself every now and then!

PAIN IS INEVITABLE

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other.

KEY THOUGHT: Pain is inevitable and it's how we deal with it that's important.

WATCH: Watch Session One of the DVD

DISCUSS:

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

People respond to pain in different ways, depending on their experiences growing up.

Question 1: What have been some of your impressions of pain growing up?

Pain is an inevitable part of life. When it comes, it is trying to tell us that something is going on that we need to face.

Question 2: Why is it important that we deal with our pain?

Numbness to pain happens when you start to live with the pain that you're going through. Not dealing with it reveals the perspective of your pain.

Question 3: What are some common coping mechanisms people use to numb their pain?

Numbness to pain is a common trait in church. Dr Sam Chand gave an example of a lightbulb that was blown in a church building; those who were new to the church noticed it but those who were regular hadn't because they were habituated to it. When we're living in community others can help us become more aware of our blind spots.

Question 4: Discuss some examples of how being in community has helped you to see your blind spots.

PRAY: Pray that God would highlight any pain that you're avoiding and give you the courage to face it.

ACTIVATE: If you've realized that you have been ignoring some pain whilst watching this session, be intentional about dealing with it. Perhaps you need to meet up with a leader to discuss and pray about it.

RESPONDING TO PAIN

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other.

KEY THOUGHT: A helpful way to respond to pain is to see it as an opportunity for God to develop strength in you.

WATCH: Watch Session Two of the DVD

DISCUSS:

Key Verse:

“But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering. Yet what we suffer now is nothing compared to the glory he will reveal to us later.”

Romans 8:18

Dealing with pain is not a common topic that is talked about. How we respond to pain is important in how we experience it.

Question 1: How do you normally respond to a painful situation?

Pain is normal! Everybody goes through pain, we often just don't know how to deal with it. That's why eGroup is important, we need people around us who can support us.

Question 2: How has being part of an eGroup helped you to deal with your pain?

Dr Sam Chand talked about 'blessed pain'. So many people look at pain as a bad thing because they have a misunderstanding of the theology of pain. Blessing often comes wrapped in pain.

Question 3: Have you experienced 'blessed pain' in your own life? How have you been able to see the benefits of your painful experience after being in the middle, and then seeing the blessing afterwards?

Dr Sam Chand gave the analogy of going to the gym. Real strength and growth only comes when you push beyond your current pain threshold and what you're comfortable with.

Question 4: Why is it important to endure pain? How have you been strengthened by enduring the process of pain in your life? If you feel comfortable, give a specific example.

Pain doesn't have to be a master over us. Instead, we should treat pain as a servant of God to bring about what He wants for us.

Question 5: What does it mean to treat pain as a 'servant'? What happens when you allow pain to take over?

PRAY: Pray that you would be able to treat your pain as a servant and have the strength to respond to it in the right way.

ACTIVATE: Recall the blessings and personal growth you've noticed in your life that has come from enduring through a painful situation.

HOLD ON

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other.

KEY THOUGHT: When we experience pain, we need to hold onto hope and the people around us.

WATCH: Watch Session Three of the DVD

DISCUSS:

Key Verse:

"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you."

1 Peter 5:10

When we go through pain, it is important that we hold on to hope. Hope is like an anchor that can hold us in a storm. If we don't have something to hold on to we'll start internalising it and wondering if there's life after the pain.

Question 1: How has holding onto hope helped you when going through a storm?

When going through a painful circumstance, we must surround ourselves with a community of people to support us.

Question 2: What happens if we isolate ourselves from others when going through pain?

Sometimes when someone is in a painful situation, the best response is to simply hug them so that they know you are present with them, rather than speak.

Question 3: When was a time in your life that a simple embrace gave you more hope than words?

We have to take steps to work through pain. Don't push people away - they could be the exact people you need to draw you closer to God.

Question 4: Why do we often push people away when we experience pain?

There is divinity in our humanity. 1 Corinthians 12 talks about gifts of the spirit that God has given to believers, chapter 13 talks about the attitude in which these gifts should be used, and chapter 14 gives some practical ways that we can live them out.

Question 5: What should the gifts of the spirit be used for?

PRAY: Break off into pairs and pray for each other, that you would be able to hold on to the right source to find hope in whatever storm you may be going through.

ACTIVATE: This week, read through 1 Corinthians 12, 13, and 14. Ask God to highlight any gifts that you have that you can use to serve other people.

THE BODY OF CHRIST

ENGAGE: Spend time connecting with each other.

KEY THOUGHT: The Body of Christ helps us when we experience pain. We need to develop trusting relationships, be vulnerable and respond to others with compassion.

WATCH: Watch Session Four of the DVD

DISCUSS:

Key Verse:

“If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.”

1 Corinthians 12:26

Dr Sam Chand gave an analogy of hammering a nail but missing and hitting your hand with the hammer instead. When one part of our body is in pain, our automatic response is to engage our entire body. He likened this response to the body of Christ.

Question 1: What are some ways that we, together as the body of christ can respond to those who are in pain?

Compassion is one of the main responses that we should have towards people who are hurting.

Question 2: What is the difference between compassion and sympathy?

Many people do not like to open up to others about what they're going through. If we want to be part of a supportive community we must be prepared to give others permission to see our struggles so they can speak into our life and pray for us.

Question 3: How does giving permission to others to hear about our pain help you deal with your struggles?

The greatest pain that we can face in life is relational. Dr Sam Chand said that we should not be like an onion, that builds up layers on the outside to protect the sweetest part on the inside.

Question 4: How do you protect yourself from relational pain? Is this approach honest and healthy?

We should not expose too much of ourselves to other people, but we should be vulnerable in front of the people that we trust. It is important that we are wise about who we share things with.

Question 5: Discuss how you as an eGroup can ensure that you are building trust with each other, and are providing opportunities to reach out and bless each other.

PRAY: Pray that God would bring comfort, understanding and resolution to those in your eGroup who are facing any kind of difficulty or pain in their relationships.

ACTIVATE: Pray that God would drop a name into your heart of someone you can compassionately reach out to. Listen to their story and share hope with them this week.

EQUIPPERS 