

GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Help the group members:

1. to understand that Jesus Christ regards personal fellowship with them as very important
2. to have a daily quiet time

I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

1. Prayer

Pray that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

2. Meditation

Worship is to deliberately seek your joy and satisfaction with the God of the Bible.

Theme: To delight yourself in the LORD

Read the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

Psalm 37:4-6.

⁴ Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your heart.

⁵ Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:

⁶ He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonDay sun.

- “When does God promise to give you the desires of your heart?”
- “When and how do you delight yourself in the LORD?”
- Think together about practical examples.

3. Worship

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to worship God (in one or two sentences) delighting themselves in the LORD.

II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

The theme for this meeting is: Quiet time

Read or explain in your own words.

Jesus calls and knocks on the door of our heart and life because he wants to come in and fellowship with us every Day (Revelation 3:20).

There are several different methods to have a quiet time. ToDay we have a quiet time by using the chosen Bible verse (or favourite truth) method of quiet time. We deliberately choose a Bible verse (or favourite truth) and learn how to meditate on it and then to respond to it by means of prayer to God. In this method we learn also to pray for other people during our quiet time.

III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.

Theme: Fellowship with God

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|---------------------|---|
| Day 1 | Psalm 1:1-6
The two ways |
| Day 2 | Psalm 5:1-3
Quiet time is a dialogue |
| Day 3 | Psalm 16:1-11
No good thing apart from God |
| Day 4 | Psalm 18:25-36
God trains me for battle |
| Day 5 | Psalm 23:1-6
The LORD is my shepherd |
| Day 6 ^{BS} | 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Serve the true God |
| Day 7 | Psalm 25:8-15
Confidential fellowship with the Lord |
| Day 8 | Psalm 27:4-10
One thing I seek |
| Day 9 | Psalm 34:7-18
The Angel of the LORD encamps around you |
| Day 10 | Psalm 40:1-3
The Lord lifts you out of the muddy pit |

IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.

If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

1. Discussing the study

Discuss the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

Theme: Quiet time: why and how

- Why does Jesus Christ say that he wants to eat with you?
- What example did Jesus and king David give?
- What are the 5 steps of the Chosen Bible Verse or Favourite Truth method of quiet time?

2. Commitment

Let the group members consider the following questions and record their answers:

- “How important is quiet time for you?”
- “When is the best time for you to have a quiet time?”

3. Personal sharing

Discuss personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

1. Review of previous Bible verses

Let pairs of group members review each other’s previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

Explain the meaning of the new Bible verse.

QUIET TIME Revelation 3:20

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock.
If anyone hears my voice and opens the door
I will come in and eat with him and he with me.

Revelations 3:20 (NIV)

VI. PRACTICAL EXERCISE (45 min.)

Theme: Fellowship with God

1. Bible passage for quiet time

Make use of the chosen Bible verse (or favourite truth) method of quiet time and have a quiet time as a small group together:

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10

¹ Paul, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy,
To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you.

² We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. ³ We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴ For we know, brothers (Greek: *adelphoi* refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 27. Thus ‘brothers and sisters’) loved by God, that he has chosen you, ⁵ because our gospel came to you not simply

with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. ⁶ You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. ⁷ And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. ⁸ The Lord’s message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, ⁹ for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, ¹⁰ and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.

2. The five steps of the chosen Bible verse method of quiet time

(1) **Pray** to prepare your heart

(2) **Read** the Bible passage

(3) **Choose** a Bible verse or favourite truth from the passage that speaks to your mind or heart

(4) **Meditate** your chosen verse or favourite truth

- by thinking about the meaning of the words,
- by talking quietly to God about this verse or truth,
- by relating it to your own life or to the world in which you live
- and by recording the most important truths.

(5) **Pray** your chosen Bible verse or favourite truth for the following people:

- for yourself
- for a family member
- for someone nearby (neighbourhood, town, church, school, work).
- for someone far away (in another city or country).

3. Explanation for the group leader

1:1

Silvanus is also called Silas (Acts 17:1-4) and was a team member of the apostle Paul during his second missionary journey (2 Corinthians 1:19)

The word ‘church’ (Greek: *ekklesia*) means the people God called out of darkness into his light (1 Peter 2:9). Together they form a community or congregation that functions like a body (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

The word ‘Lord’ (Greek: *kurios*) is the Greek translation of the Old Testament Hebrew word for the LORD (Hebrew: *JaHWeH*). In Mark 1:1-3 John the Baptist prepares the way for the coming of the LORD, namely,

Jesus Christ. Thus, the Lord Jesus Christ in the New Testament is the LORD of the Old Testament!

‘Grace’ means God’s free gift of salvation and all heavenly blessings.

‘Peace’ means that God has removed the enmity between him and believers and has completely restored their brokenness so that have become what he wants them to be.

1:2

“We thank ... and pray”. Christians pray with one another and for one another (e.g. in a prayer meeting).

1:3

“Your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love and your endurance inspired by hope”. The emphasis is not on the words ‘faith, love and hope’, but rather on the words ‘work, labour and endurance’!

Their work originates from their faith, is executed by faith and shows their faith! Their labour originates from love, is stimulated by love and manifests their love! Their endurance originates from their hope (expectation), is inspired by their hope and proves their hope!

The One who continually sees their work, labour and endurance is God! What Christians do is continually visible to God (Hebrews 4:13)!

1:4 Election

Paul, Silas and Timothy know that the Christians in Thessalonica are chosen (elected), because their election becomes visible in their work, labour and endurance! It is seen in the work of the Holy Spirit in their midst, their growth and their involvement in the extension of God’s kingdom through the proclamation of the gospel.

It is therefore not true that Christians can never know whether Christians are chosen (elected).

➤ *Election is not the same as ‘knowing before’.*

Election does not mean that God only knows before whether someone would believe in him¹. Election is not based on God seeing a long time before the faith and obedience (works) of Christians. No man can boast in God’s presence (1 Corinthians 1:27-29; 4:7; Ephesians 1:4-5; 2:8-9).

➤ *Election is God’s sovereign privilege and is unconditional.*

Someone becomes a child of God, not based on his descent (parents), but by reason of God’s sovereign promise (Romans 9:6-9).

Someone becomes a child of God, not based on his works, but by reason of God’s sovereign purpose in election and sovereign calling (Romans 9:10-13).

Someone becomes a child of God, not based on his (free) will (desire) or effort, but by reason of God’s sovereign mercy (Romans 9:14-18).

Election is not limited to the non-Jews, because in every generation throughout history God also chose a remnant of Jews (Romans 11:5).

Election has to do with individuals (Romans 16:13). Election includes Christians in Jesus Christ so that they are as inseparable from him as the Body is from the Head(cf. Ephesians 1:4,13-14,22-23).

➤ *Election is completely fair (just)*

God is perfectly just and fair. Also his election of certain people unto salvation is perfectly just and fair, because all people that ever lived are by nature unrighteous (sinners) and deserve nothing. No one deserves to be chosen (elected)!

Already at the fall of mankind into sin all Adam’s descendants have lost the possibility to be justified on the basis of their own will and works due to their unity with Adam. Romans 5:12,18 says, “¹²Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned (literally: because all sinned *once for all*) (in solidarity with Adam) — ¹⁸Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all (natural) people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all people (Christians)!”

By nature no one subjects himself to God and to God’s Word. By nature no one is able to subject himself to God and to God’s Word (Romans 8:7-8)! By nature all people that ever lived are already condemned (John 3:18). God’s wrath rests on them (John 3:36). And they will go to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46; Romans 8:1; Revelation 21:8). Even their best works fall short of God’s demand to be absolutely perfect (Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 3:10; James 2:10).

But when someone comes to faith in Jesus Christ, then he is declared forgiven and saved from God’s wrath (Romans 5:9,17)!

¹ Romans 8:29 in the Living Bible

Even if not a single person would be elected unto salvation, God would still be perfectly just (fair). God has not made election something that is dependent on anything man is or does. God is the Creator and just as the potter has the sovereign right to shape the clay as he wants, so God has the sovereign right to destine many of his creatures to share in his eternal glory and exclude the others. God has the sovereign right to decide whom he elects and whom he hardens (Romans 9:19-24).

➤ *Election includes God's complete work of salvation.* God's election includes justification, sanctification and ultimate glorification (Romans 8:29-30)! God will certainly complete the good work he began (Philippians 1:6; cf. John 5:24; 10:28).

➤ *Election includes the responsibility of the believer.* The election of God never opposes the responsibility of man. The election of God includes the responsibility of man to respond to God's invitation. God has the sovereign right to demand that every human being surrenders his life to him!

The following statement is not true: "When someone is elected, he is saved regardless whether he believes in Jesus Christ, no matter how he lives and regardless whether he bears the fruit of the Spirit." Such a person can never be sure whether he is saved! Just as Christ's resurrection cannot be separated from his death, so a Christian's obedience cannot be separated from his faith and his sanctification cannot be separated from his justification!

Because true believers have been elected, they exert themselves all the more to make their election and calling sure (2 Peter 1:8-11)!

Election is not simply an election unto salvation, but an election to every aspect of the Christian life. Election certainly becomes visible in the lives of true Christians:

- Genuine Christians cannot be deceived by false prophets (Matthew 24:24)
- Genuine Christians grow and blossom and bear fruit in their daily lives (1 Thessalonians 1:3-4)
- Genuine Christians are involved with other Christians in the Great Commission (1 Thessalonians 1:7-8)
- Genuine Christians persevere in spite of persecution (Matthew 24:24; cf. Revelation 2:11)
- Genuine Christians have been chosen to live holy and blameless lives (Ephesians 1:4; Colossians 3:12-15)
- Genuine Christians have been chosen to serve (Colossians 3:16-17; Acts 9:15-16)
- And genuine Christians will inherit the perfect salvation (Romans 8:29-30; 11:7,29; 2 Timothy 2:19)

Thus, election is not merely an abstract, philosophical concept within unintelligible theological dogma, but influences every aspect of life, is effective and unchangeable.

➤ *Election is eternal (before time), but also in history (in time).*

The election of Jesus Christ to be the Redeemer (1 Peter 1:20) and the election of Christians (Ephesians 1:4) is eternal and happens before the creation of the world and before the beginning of time (2 Timothy 1:9).

Election becomes a reality (in experience) within human time (history) when God calls people through the proclamation of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) to become obedient to the Christian Faith (Romans 1:5). Then they are being chosen out of this hostile world (John 15:19).

God's election and calling is always effective (Romans 9:11-12; cf. Romans 1:6-7)! God draws people he elected to Jesus Christ; he gives them to Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ grants them eternal life (John 6:44,37; 17:2). "None have been lost" (John 17:12)!

➤ *Election is taught by Jesus Christ and Paul.*

Election is not only taught by the apostle Paul, but also by the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:39,44; 10:11,14,27-28; 17:2,6,9,11-12,24).

The elect are called 'brothers' (1 Thessalonians 1:4), a word that includes both men as women.

1:5

The Christians in Thessalonica were probably attacked by a sect who regarded themselves as 'Christians', but in reality tried to force people to keep the Jewish ceremonial laws (Acts 15:1).

Paul urges the Christians in Thessalonica not to allow these sectarians to undermine their faith in Christ's completed work of salvation for them. He encourages them by saying that what happened to them (e.g. persecution by non-Christians) is the proof that they are really elected (cf. 2 Timothy 3:12)!

The Thessalonians came to faith in Jesus Christ. Their faith produced work, their love prompted labour and their hope inspired endurance. They followed the example of Paul, Silas and Timothy. They in turn proclaimed the gospel to others. The 'power' of the gospel is not shown by worldly weapons, by holy wars or by human methods, but is spiritual 'dynamite' to blow up the worship of false gods and to cause people to turn to the living God.

The Holy Spirit clearly worked visibly in the minds and hearts of people through the ministry of Paul and his co-workers. Their ministry was to proclaim the gospel and to live a life that can be followed. Their life-style and ministry was pass-on-able.

1:6

The Christians in Thessalonica began to follow the example of Paul and his co-workers and thus the example of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. They in turn became the model or example for other new believers. They too bore the oppressions and persecutions with the joy which the Holy Spirit produced in them.

1:7-10

They became a model to new Christians in their own province Macedonia and in the adjacent province of Achaia and finally in the whole known world.

Everywhere people spoke about how the Thessalonians had turned from idolatry to God and how they focussed their lives on Jesus Christ.

VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

Pray with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

Pray with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

Hand out the preparation for the next gathering.