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FACILITATING A TIME OF PRAYER IN YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

Prayer is a crucial part of a vibrant relationship with God and the most important element to have in your small group for caring for your members. The role as a Group Leader regarding prayer is to foster a time where group members are open to sharing prayer needs and praises. It's important to facilitate a prayer time to help people grow in their prayer life and feel that they can share openly in a safe environment.

Opening up a time of prayer at the beginning or the end of your time together can be intimidating to group members whether your group has new believers or mature believers. It's important that as a Leader along with your Care Leader(s) that you remind members as you start out meeting, that prayer is not about lofty words or how they may sound in front of others, God hears each of us just as we are.

Guidelines and ideas for prayer time in your group.

1. Include a time of prayer each group meeting.
2. We have found the most success by offering a time of prayer after the time of connection and before discussion time.
3. During this time, go around the room and ask for prayer requests and how we can support them. Remind the group that everything that is said is confidential unless otherwise noted. When someone has a prayer request, please stop and pray for them immediately. Take turns praying for one another.
4. Remind members to keep prayer requests personal. We want to pray for them. Encourage them to share either a prayer request, praise report, or personal struggle.
5. To help members share, ask: Are there any challenges or needs we can pray for you this week? Don't be afraid of member's silence. This is a time of vulnerability and it takes time to build trust for new members.
6. Remind the group that each member's commitment to confidentiality applies to all aspects of the group time, including prayer!
7. The Care Leader(s) should write down member's needs/requests to share out with group members via email or text. Be sure to have a member's permission to share a request.

Safety protocol – When to seek assistance

1. Should a member raise a prayer request that indicates:
 - a. They do not feel safe in their home
 - b. Abusive situation
 - c. Suicidal tendencies or thoughts
 - d. Share something bordering on illegal
 - e. Struggle with an addiction and need help
 - f. Dire financial struggle
 - g. Any other crisis or situation where the Leader feels they need assistance in supporting the member.
2. The Leader should contact a staff member immediately after the group time or the following day depending on the urgency of the situation.
3. It is advisable to tell the member, a Leader will reach out on their behalf and have a staff member contact them. While we want to support the member, it is best they receive the care and support from trained staff or professional help.