

 GRACE POINT CHURCH



GROUP LEADER GUIDE

2025-2026



GROUP LEADER GUIDE

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HELLO, GROUP LEADER!

Thank you for saying yes to leading a GPC Group! We are beyond grateful for your commitment, investment, and sacrifice.

Your “yes” is making a way for people in our church family to step in and experience Jesus. There are many ways our people gather and grow together but we believe one of the best places for Biblical community and discipleship is through Groups. We are not made to walk alone — we need one another!

We want to be holistic disciples who practice the way of Jesus together.
In our Groups, we do this through

- Biblical community
- Intentional care
- Holistic formation
- Sacrificial mission

A crucial aspect in all we do is **making holistic disciples** — disciples who abide in God’s Word, love one another, and bear fruit (John 8:21-32, 13:34-35, 15:8).



*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up,
just as you are doing.*

1 Thessalonians 5:11



WHY GROUPS?

We believe that the way of Jesus is best practiced with others. We see Jesus doing this in the greatest group of all time: the Twelve. As we join on mission with Christ, we believe our Groups will be a place of Christlike community partnering together in life-on-life discipleship with one another.

We all have a desire to belong and be known. We believe our Groups are like a family who care for, pray for, and love one another. Our Triune God exists in a constant state of community and so should we!

Disciples need more than knowledge to grow. They need a community where needs can be expressed and received, love and encouragement given, and strong relationships that model the life of Christ.

We believe our small groups give us this opportunity for believers to meet together to find fellowship and support. Within them is a strong emphasis on encouragement, unity and openness as people intercede for and minister together.

Small groups are also an intentional part of evangelism and church growth.

Meaningful relationships are always attractive to those searching for purpose and community. The openness and joy are evangelistic magnets for relational connections.

Within small groups there exists a wide range of spiritual maturity. This diversity can allow the young disciples to gain wisdom and support from more matured disciples; and new converts bring zeal and enthusiasm that mature disciples find refreshing.

We believe that small groups offer truth learned within real life experiences. They find truths by examples, actions, emotions and experiences. These shared experiences as a group bond one-another into conformity to Christ.

Also, within small groups, leadership can be shared by many in the group as many will get the opportunity to grow in ministry skills and giftings. Within a group, people's spiritual gifts can be identified and fanned into flame.

Small groups balance the understanding of truth with forming loving relationships in the midst of sharing life with one-another: it's the method of Jesus. Jesus questioned His disciples, gave them tasks, told stories, answered questions, gave positions of leadership, and taught them through daily conflict and interaction. He helped His disciples both hear and experience truth at the same time; they left changed. We must imitate the teachings but most importantly imitate the way in which Jesus taught and lived His life.

We must teach truth and live it out in the midst of relationships, and this happens in

biblical community, as we are strengthening our understanding of truth and growing together in love.

If our desire is to create holistic disciples who love the same way Jesus loved, we must be put into situations to exhibit this. Within biblical community we are taught to obey everything that the Holy Spirit and Jesus command us to do!

DISTINCTIVES OF A GROUP

Biblical Community

We want everyone at Grace Point Church to find lasting community in and through Groups. When Groups gather, healthy relationships form naturally (Heb. 10:25). The gospel writer Luke reveals what true biblical community is by saying, “And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul” (Acts 2:42-43).

Intentional care

Our prayer is that people will find support in our Groups as we cultivate a mutually beneficial spirit of compassion. Groups carry one another’s burdens and are a great help in times of need (Gal. 6:2). We desire to intentionally pursue and care for one another with Christlike empathy and love.



Holistic formation

Our hope is that people will grow closer to Jesus and be formed into His image through consistent, relational study as we grow together in Christ (Eph. 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 3:18). Holistic discipleship doesn’t just pursue our own formation, but the formation of the whole family. The author of Hebrews says it best, “And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Sacrificial mission

Groups focused on giving their lives away end up gaining life for themselves. People grow most when they are on mission together. In our Groups, we want to join with Christ on the same mission He gave His disciples. The mission has always stayed the same: Jesus said, “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Jesus, the Master disciple-maker, has commissioned us join Him in Kingdom-advancing work by:

- making disciples of all nations,
- baptizing them in the name of the Triune God,
- teaching obedience in all that Christ has commanded.

WHAT IS A GROUP?

A Group is a place of biblical community, a family. Ideally, Groups consist of 8 to 16 people. They are typically co-ed (men and women).

When and where do Groups meet?

Groups meet in and around Northwest Arkansas, either in members' homes or at the Grace Point campus. Most of our groups meet every week. Depending on your Group and the time you meet, you may want to mix it up! Whether you meet in a coffee shop or an apartment, a restaurant or a gym, there's plenty of room for flexibility, but consistency in meeting day and time, and clear communication are key. Many of our groups rotate among different group members' houses each week as an option. Even if the location changes, keep the day and time consistent.



And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:24-25

What do Groups do?

All of our Groups will discuss the current sermon series. Each week, the GPC Discipleship Team will send a Sermon Discussion Guide to each leader. This is an opportunity to put into practice what we are learning on Sundays and live it out in community Monday through Saturday.

Our Groups discuss truths about God, pray together, and explore local mission opportunities. Many of our groups share meals, snacks, coffee, or desserts during gatherings. Many of our groups sit together and worship together on Sundays!

Why sermon-based Groups?

- Increased attentiveness during Sunday sermons.
- Increased note-taking; it's contagious!
- Spirited discussion around the message.
- Churchwide focus (no disjointed body).
- More effective leaders. Simply by attending the sermon and taking notes, each group leader already comes into group time with at least 45 minutes of preparation.
- Fewer crazy tangents, questions, and conversations about random topics.
- Adds context and framework to the study each week.

Does a group always use the Sermon Discussion Guide?

Most of the time, yes. While we are encouraging a focus on the Sermon Discussion Guides (see a sample guide on Page 20), we also recognize the role and place of the Holy Spirit to be active in our Groups. As we engage as a Group each week, the Holy Spirit may be shifting conversation somewhere else, and as a leader it is up to you to discern this and allow yourself to be led by the Spirit. Knowing this, we want to encourage flexibility in your group time, and if there are any complimentary resources that partner well with the sermon series or Sunday messages, let us know and we will help you utilize those for your group!

Who may lead a GPC Group?

Group leaders are Covenant Members of Grace Point Church. They regularly worship with the GPC family, live as committed followers of Christ, and support the mission and work of Grace Point. We ask that they attend Group Leader training when offered.

WHAT IS MY ROLE AS A GROUP LEADER?

Initiate

As leaders gather with their Groups, growth and care will happen naturally. The key, however, is to initiate. Start with an ice breaker or share a personal story. Initiate good questions and conversations referencing the Sermon Discussion Guide.

Facilitate

One of the primary roles of the Group leader is to develop and strengthen the skill of facilitating conversation. We will do our best as a team to set you up for success in providing content and discussion questions, but the better you are able to navigate conversation, the more beneficial the time as a group will be.

Build Relationships

Make introductions often. Save people the embarrassment of forgetting names. Look for opportunities to bring people into conversations. Keep conversations positive. As people build relationships with each other, your role becomes easier. Share your testimonies to best get to know one another!



Listen

Listening is one of the greatest gifts you can give somebody. When people feel heard, they feel understood.

Encourage questions and participation

Help people engage with the topic. If your Group is doing most of the talking, you are doing something right. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." We desire our Groups to be contributors, not consumers.

Lead out in prayer and Scripture reading

Make prayer a priority. People need to see that anyone can talk to God. Not everyone will be comfortable praying in front of others but try to create a space each week where people are prayed over. Get creative. Identify someone in your group to write down the prayers. This will enable you to share the requests with absent members and will help you celebrate answered prayers. Ask people to read Scripture aloud and emphasize that everyone should bring their Bible each week!

Communicate

Creating a semester schedule will help maintain good attendance. Choose which method of communication is best for your small group, whether its via Group Text, GroupMe, Slack, or other channels. Designate someone in your group to be the communication lead.

Communicate who will bring food and encourage different people to share this role each week. Creating a plan for this will make it easier for everyone.

Communicate your plan for childcare. Does your group want to make plans for babysitting to be offered where the group meets? Don't let this be an obstacle; the church offers childcare onsite every Thursday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm and on Sundays from 4:30 to 6:30 pm.

Connect with group members between weekly meetings via face-to-face or phone, email, text, or social media. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well. Create a relaxed, enjoyable environment. Have fun and encourage appropriate laughter.

Disciple

Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring-for and leading your group. Not only does this provide a discipleship opportunity, it empowers people in the Group to grow in their spiritual gifts. Encourage those in your group to serve and use their spiritual gifts at GPC. If there is a new believer in your group, consider walking through a book of the Bible with him or her. We have a resource guide for new believers that we would be happy to provide.

Create Healthy Boundaries

For yourself and for your Group, respect members' time by beginning and ending the meeting punctually. Consistency is key.

Record attendance on Planning Center Online or via the App

As a Group leader, we ask that you take a minute to update your Planning Center Group Roster at the beginning of the new Group semester (and anytime updates are needed) and take weekly attendance through the Church Center App (PlanningCenterOnline.com). This will help the discipleship team come alongside you to care for the people in your Group and make any improvements for Group engagement.

Find a missional serve opportunity

Each Group will partner and serve together in at least one missional opportunity each semester. We understand and believe we are walking in Christlike obedience when we serve together to be the hands and feet of Jesus to those in need around us. Please let us know what your missional opportunity will be or if we can help you get connected with one! (We are presently developing this area more fully. Stand by!)

Pursue holiness

As a leader you model Christlikeness to your Group. While every Christian is on a journey to deeper sanctification, as a leader, you have a higher calling to pursue holiness and model it to those around you. If leaders are valuing daily time with Jesus, engaging in the spiritual disciplines, cultivating a repentant prayer life, and taking steps of faith, it will be a model and encouragement to those you are leading.

Reach out to the Discipleship Team!

We are ready and available to lend a hand. If your role ever becomes burdensome, we want to know. Please reach out about content, member care, frustrations, Jesus stories, and other celebrations — anything! We want to hear from you.

What are some helpful Group practices?

- Have everyone write and share their story of salvation. Limit it to 3-5 minutes to respect everyone's time.
- Set your start and end times, then honor them.
- Pray with and for your group.
- Create memorable moments. Stick to the structure but create opportunities for fun and spontaneity, whether that's over a shared meal or game night.
- Share responsibilities! Rotate group locations if feasible and have others lead your discussion at times. Be sensitive to those who may have the ability and desire to lead.
- Celebrate special occasions and honor one another. Everyone likes to be celebrated!



Take some time out to celebrate special moments like baptisms, birth days, promotions, major life-events, new jobs, passing exams and certifications, graduating, and other big milestones. As we celebrate and honor people, we show that we value them, and it diminishes a spirit of pride, comparison, and competition.

- Connect people to GPC. We want to challenge every Group member to take the next step in their faith journey:
 - *Do they regularly attend **Sunday worship gatherings**?*
 - *Have they completed the **GPC Membership Class**?*
 - *Have they been **baptized following their salvation**?*
 - *Have they completed a **Spiritual Gifts Test**?*
 - *Do they **serve at GPC** on Sundays or other times?*

It is our vision to see every Group member fully connected and using their gifts! We encourage you to be on the lookout for potential members for your group and potential leaders — people who can be raised up to start a group of their own or co-lead your group.



And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching; and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:42

WHAT IS A TYPICAL GROUP MEETING LIKE?

- Refreshments or a shared meal in an enjoyable environment: 15 to 20 minutes
- Sharing and breaking the ice: 15 to 30 minutes
- Share prayer requests, highs and lows, life updates, or an icebreaker. Don't force depth but provide an opportunity for depth.
- Study and discussion: 45 minutes
Go through the Sermon Discussion Guide
Encourage everyone to come with their answers to the discussion questions already considered or filled out.
- Prayer: 15-20 minutes. Some groups split up by gender, or in smaller groups.
- Worship element (optional at the beginning or the end): singing, listening to an appropriate song, or watching a short worship video.

Helpful guide for conversation or questions:

Getting to know one another:

- Talk about current or past life situations related to questions from the message.

Getting into the Bible:

- Take the group to Biblical passages that are complimentary or parallel to the main text that may have not been in the message.

Getting into application:

- Drive home the main points and message and how they can challenge your Group.

Facilitating a good group discussion

- Set Expectations
- Share the basic plan for the session as you begin:
Example: "Tonight, we are going to recap the Pastor's message then look at his Scripture references in a couple of different translations. After that we'll work through a few questions about the message, then give you a chance to share and go deeper with one another. We will then close with final thoughts and prayer needs."
- Ask open-ended questions.

- Avoid asking questions that answer with “yes” or “no.” Encourage full participation.
- Avoid doing all the talking.
- Embrace the awkward silences. This is normal!
- Keep the discussion positive.
- Discourage overly-critical attitudes, and set the initial tone for the group.
- Say their names: address people by name so they will know they are seen.
- Lead the discussion back to the topic.
- When tangents occur, or when difficult questions, sensitive subjects, or unrelated topics come up, offer to follow up one-on-one. “I would be glad to help you find some resources concerning that question.” Be okay with “I don’t know.”

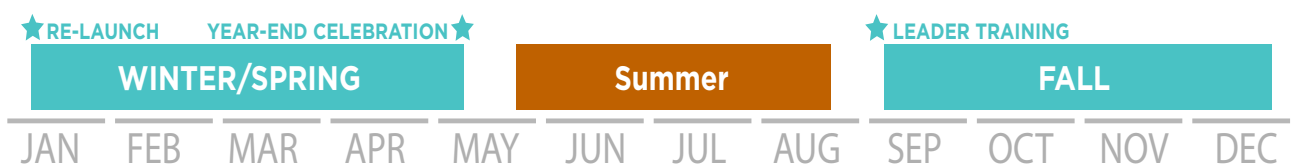
What if some members have young children?

We believe children are a gift and a blessing, not a hindrance or distraction. That being said, we also recognize that certain environments and levels of engagement are affected by having children present. We encourage Groups to creatively plan to have children attend, whether that’s contributing towards a babysitter, using GPC childcare, or periodically rotating group dynamics to meet everyone’s needs.

Do Groups meet year-round?

We encourage Groups to adopt the following rhythms to provide the best care and support for our leaders and members:

- **Collective Group Leader Training** once per year in August
- Spring semester: Groups will begin meeting again after the New Year begins and meet until our year-end celebration in May. We typically pause during June and July.
- We encourage Groups to “sabbath” during the Summer to rest, socialize, and serve together. Find ways to foster and grow in relationships. Maybe have a worship night or find a day to serve together. Groups may continue meeting informally if they wish, but we encourage this break in routine to be life-giving and restful for our leaders and members.
- Groups will resume meeting after the August Leader Training and continue until December, pausing for the holidays.



What are the characteristics of a healthy Group?

- A shared culture of honor and celebration (this limits comparison and competition).
- A shared culture of authenticity and transparency (this limits superficiality and pride).
- A shared pursuit of biblical repentance.
- A shared culture of commitment and consistency.
- A shared love for God's Word.
- A shared love for one-another.
- A shared desire to serve together.

How are disciples made in Groups?

- Begin by seeking a warm, loving relationship with the disciple.
- Make yourself available for frequent and reoccurring contact.
- Give the disciple exposure to your own authenticity and vulnerability.
- Allow the disciple to observe you in a variety of life settings and situations.
- Show consistency and clarity of your behavior and values.
- A correspondence between your behavior and the biblical beliefs of the group you are leading.
- Create shared experiences to practice the Christian walk together.
- Read Scripture together.
- Pray and fast together.
- Participate in spiritual disciplines and rhythms together.
- Help the disciple identify his or her spiritual gifts.
- A mutual pursuit of holiness and sanctification.
- Gradually give others responsibilities to grow and lead.

Think OPSI:

O: Observation

P: Participation

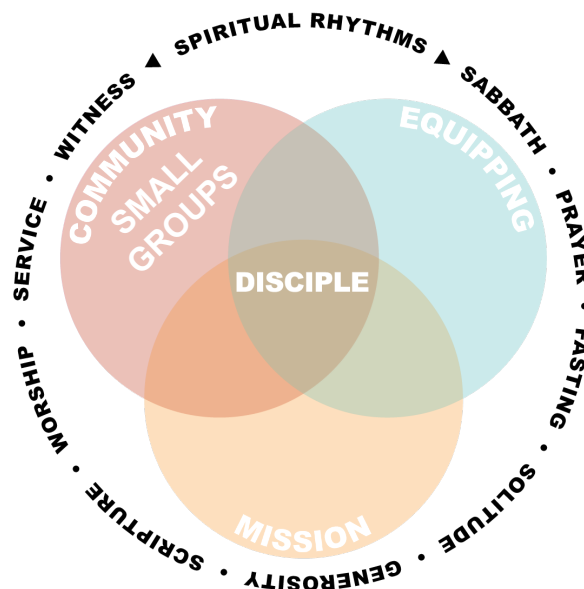
S: Supervision

I: Interdependence

THE ONE-ANOTHERS OF SCRIPTURE

God's people are the Church when we love and serve each other in the way that God has designed us to live together. Which is why in the Bible, there are many verses that tell Christians how we should treat one another. These "one another" verses can only be lived out in relationship with other Christians. These one-anothers form the biblical basis of what we mean when we say biblical community, and these are the marks of a Christian:

Our aim is to create spaces where the "one another" commands of Scripture are practiced regularly. These are not ideals for a few, but essentials for all who are part of Christ's body.



Over one-third of the one-another commands in the New Testament speak to the unity of the church:

- Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
- Do not grumble among one another (John 6:43)
- Live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16, 15:5)
- Welcome one another (Romans 15:7)
- Don't devour, destroy, and consume one another Galatians 5:15)
- Don't boastfully challenge or envy one another (Galatians 5:26)
- Gently, patiently tolerate one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
- Be kind, tender-hearted, and bear with and forgive one another (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)
- Seek good for one another, and don't repay evil for evil (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

- Don't complain, grumble or gossip about one another (James 4:11, 5:9)
- Confess sins to and pray with one another (James 5:16)
- Don't lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)
- Teach and admonish one another in all wisdom (Colossians 3:16)

Another third of the one-anothers instruct Christians to love one another:

Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 4:7, 11; 2 John 5)

Through love, humbly serve one another (Galatians 5:13)

Bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)

- Greet one another with love and hospitality (1 Peter 4:9, 5:14)
- Be devoted to and honor one another in love (Romans 12:10)
- Carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- Speak truth to one another (Ephesians 4:25)
- Comfort, build up, and encourage one another in times of need (1 Thessalonians 4:18, 5:11)
- Spur one another to love and good works (Hebrews 10:24)

The remaining one-anothers instruct an attitude of humility and honor among Christians:

- Give preference to one another in honor (Romans 12:10)
- Regard one another as more important than yourselves (Philippians 2:3)
- Serve one another (Galatians 5:13)
- Wash one another's feet (John 13:14)
- Do not be arrogant with one another (Romans 12:16)
- Submit to one another (Ephesians 5:21)
- Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)
- Do not place stumbling blocks before one another (Romans 14:13)

Clearly, the most common phrase in this list is "love one another," but really all of the verses are about loving one another—because love is an action, and because all of God's commands can be summarized as loving God and loving neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40; Romans 13:9-10; Galatians 5:14). Living out these verses in community is how we can love—and be loved—by one another. And this is how the world will know that we are followers of Jesus, by the way that we love one-another!



DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY VIDEOS



DISCIPLES ABIDE IN CHRIST, LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AND BEAR FRUIT

The Apostle Paul urged believers to “attain to the measure of the stature that belongs to the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13). Grace Point’s Discipleship Pathway is designed to help believers navigate their journey to spiritual maturity. You’ll learn what a disciple is, what they do, where they go, and how they move forward in their walk with Christ.

This series equips viewers to understand and embrace the rhythms of spiritual growth, the importance of community, and the call to live out the Gospel in everyday life. Whether you are new to the faith or seeking to grow in spiritual maturity, this series provides practical steps, biblical insight, and a clear vision for becoming a disciple who makes disciples.

Watch the videos in sequence, then visit our Discipleship page or contact us for more information on other resources and opportunities.

www.GracePointChurch.net/DP

VIDEO ONE: Introduction

SESSION ONE: “What is a Disciple”

SESSION TWO: “The Three Spaces”

SESSION THREE: “Living as a Disciple”

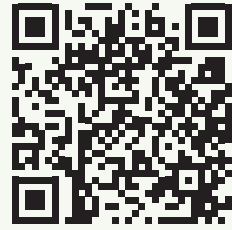
SESSION FOUR: “Spiritual Gifts”

SESSION FIVE: “Spiritual Maturity Pathway”

SESSION SIX: “Scope of Discipleship”

SESSION SEVEN: “Diving Deeper”

GROUP LEADER RESOURCES



Use the QR Code or visit

GracePointChurch.net/GroupResources for the following:

- **Pulse Form** (the best way to communicate with the D Team)
- **Church Center Online** (gracepointchurch.churchcenter.com/groups)
- **Group Leader Application** (gracepointchurch.net/groups)
- **Core Classes or other events: registration** (gracepointchurch.net/events)
- **Equipping: Core Classes, Bible Studies, Men's and Women's Events**
(gracepointchurch.net/equipping)
- **Message Videos Archive** (gracepointchurch.net/watch)
- **Discipleship Pathway Video Series** (gracepointchurch.net/dp)
- **Podcast: search Grace Point Church Northwest Arkansas** in your App provider.

In Development (keep an eye on the *Group Leader Resources Page!*)

- **New Believer Resource Guide**
- **Group Service Opportunities**
- **Group Leader Training Videos**

*What did we miss? Let us know if you have suggestions for
our Resource Page or Leader Training Book!*

HEY! SEND US PHOTOS OF YOUR GROUP

studying, praying, fellowshiping, serving, whatever!

Email to Jared, Tim, or Kim @gracepointchurch.net

SAMPLE: GRACE POINT CHURCH SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

This will give you an idea of what our weekly Sermon Discussion Guides are like. We write and distribute them to Group leaders as early as possible on Sunday mornings. Some leaders send them to their Group members prior to meeting.

Mar 11, 2025

Speaker: Brett Ferguson, Interim Teaching Pastor

Series: The Book of Acts, Week 3

Primary Scripture: Acts 3

Opening Prayer, Ice-Breaker, Worship: (begin with prayer, a fun ice-breaker, or a time of worship)

Recap & Context of Sermon:

Brett continued teaching through the book of Acts, and the main point from his sermon was: The Holy Spirit authenticates the gospel through ordinary obedience and the power in the name of Jesus. It is the power of the Holy Spirit who authenticates the message and name of Jesus.

But there are two **Dangers** to avoid:

1. If you pray for a miracle and it doesn't happen you just don't have enough faith.
2. God doesn't work in this miraculous way anymore.

Be careful to not fall into these two dangerous camps!

While Acts was a special time and the apostles were unique, we still have the same Holy Spirit living inside of us now and as was then. The question then is, do we really believe the Holy Spirit moves in power? If so, it means everything we do changes. Miracles are one way the Holy Spirit authenticates the gospel, they are a glimpse of the Kingdom.

Miracles also authenticate God's desire and ability to restore all things and miracles point to the future restoration of all things; they reveal the redemptive power of Jesus and His heart and character. Lastly, miracles authenticate our need for salvation. Brett finally challenged us with this: Ordinary obedience opens doors, specifically for the Holy Spirit in our life, and this usually happens through prayer and faithful daily obedience.

Read the Text: Acts 3:1-16

Discussion Questions:

1. Brett said, "The gospel is the most generous gift we could ever give someone." What did he mean by this and how do miracles connect with our need for salvation? Is there anyone you know who God is calling you to extend this generous gift to?

2. The name of Jesus has power and we need to act like we believe it and want to get involved! Have you ever been witness to the power of the name of Jesus proclaimed in a miraculous way in your own life or in someone else's? How can we grow in our desire to remember and act upon knowing that Jesus' name does have power? How does the Holy Spirit involve us in this?
3. When we pray bold prayers that are specific, focused on God's desires and Kingdom and not our own, this comes from a place of belief that the name of Jesus has power. Do you believe this? What prayers can we be praying that are bold and confident in belief in the name of Jesus?
4. Why do miracles usually come with sacrifice and vulnerability? Is there something God is calling you to sacrifice or be vulnerable about, so that the power of Jesus can work in your heart/life?
5. Do we really believe the Holy Spirit moves in power? If so, what changes? And what is the primary way we get to engage and witness this? (Brett shared this comes through prayer!).

Application:

For further study and discussion on the person and role of the Holy Spirit I would recommend these books:

- 1) Gift & Giver - Craig Keener
- 2) Practicing the Power - Sam Storms
- 3) Joy Unspeakable - Martin Lloyd Jones
- 4) God's Empowering Presence - Gordon Fee
- 5) Tim Keller - Prayer

Time of Honor: "Outdo one-another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10).

Take a few minutes to honor one-another in the group, encouraging traits that you see modeled well as followers of Christ. Use this time to give a word of encouragement, edification or honor for the members .

Prayer

- How can we as a group help/support/pray for one-another?
- Spend time praying bold prayers asking the Holy Spirit to move in power in one-another's lives for the sake of the mission of God.