

# LIVING ON A PRAYER STUDY

GUIDE



January 2024







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January 6-7, 2024

# JESUS' MINISTRY BEGUN

## Opening Prayer

Take prayer requests from those gathered in your group and have someone pray out loud over these requests and this study.

## Friend and Storyteller Time

- Where have you seen God this week?
- Highs/Lows?
- What makes you special? How are you different than others around you?
- How was the Christmas season?  
Now that we are in the new year, do you have a new challenge that you are undertaking?

## Read Mark 1:21-34

- What is the main teaching from this scripture readings? (Discuss and come to a group consensus.)
- What verse or verses stood out to you? Why was it meaningful to you?

- Ever listen to a presentation and say "Wow, that was good!" (Every weekend the Pastors speak, right!?) What was it that made it good? Were you more likely to share that information with others?
- What happened following the news of Jesus' teaching and amazing act of authority over impure spirits?

As we enter the new year and begin our own new challenges, be it weight loss, exercising, less technology, social media free, news free, praying more, connecting with family better, or any other new challenge. Do you go to Jesus when that impure spirit pops in your head to take you off your path? The one saying "You've been great this week. One little cookie will be OK!" But, we all know one leads to two and so on. How will you allow Jesus to keep you on your path when you feel most vulnerable?

### Read Mark 1:35-39

- What is the main teaching from this scripture reading? (Discuss and come to a group consensus.)
- Jesus Prayed! Okay, of course he did, but why? Did you know that this is only 1 of 4 times he prayed on his own? He is shown to pray *alone* in Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 9:18, and Luke 22:39-41. Read each of these and a few verses before and after for context. What do you think drove Jesus to pray in solitude?
- What did praying affirm for him?
- How often are you in true solitude? We live in an input-always world and often do not take the time to be with our own thoughts. It is a great opportunity to reconnect with God in prayer. There are many times to reconnect, including the checkout line at the store, turning the radio off in the car, or other times throughout the day. How will you do it this week?

### Read Mark 1:40-45

- What is the main teaching from this scripture reading? (Discuss and come to a group consensus.)
- Why do you think Jesus wanted the man to stay quiet except to the priests?

### Servant and Growing as a Guide Time

Beginning anything new is both exciting and terrifying. We have moments where we have momentum and then all of the sudden it flips and we are faced with a hurdle that often seems bigger than it actually is. How we choose to respond in these situations can define our success. When Jesus was starting his ministry, he was tasked with speaking to crowds with authority, wisdom, and new thought, as well as healing the sick and chasing away evil spirits. All in a day's work, right?! What was his response? Pray!! Not in front of everyone, but in solitude. The ultimate prayer to his father in Heaven to guide him and give him strength to know he is on the right path. This week as you take on the new year, and have your new task challenge, remember to block out the noise, find some solitude and pray! Jesus did and so can you!

### Closing Prayer

Dear God,

Be our guide in our lives as we move forward into the new year. Keep us on the path that you have set forth. Give us the strength to block out the distractions in our life, so we can connect to you and others in our lives. Help us become more like Jesus, knowing that we, too, can chase our own demons away with your help. Thank you for giving us the gift of Jesus and shining through him. In your name we pray, Amen.

## Opening Prayer

Take prayer requests from those gathered in your group, and have someone pray out loud over these requests at this study.

## Friend and Storyteller Time

- Where have you seen God this week?
- Highs/Lows?
- What makes you special? How are you different than others around you?
- 

## Read Mark 2:1-22

- What is the main teaching from this scripture readings? (Discuss and come to a group consensus.)
- What verse or verses stood out to you? Why was it meaningful to you?

In this reading there are three big lessons from Jesus. What are they?

1. **Reread verses 8b-11.** What do think Jesus is saying to all who are there?
  - How does/can this apply to your life as a follower of Jesus?
- **Reread verse 17b.** What is Jesus saying here?
  - Who is healthy and who is sick? Are you sick or healthy? Are you called or not?
- **Reread verses 21-22.** What do you think Jesus saying here? (NOTE: This one is harder. Here is context of what each “character” is:
  - Patch & New Wine: These represent Jesus and his teachings
  - Old Cloths & Old Wince Skins: The Pharisees and the old teachings
- Jesus did not come to follow the old ways and make them right. He came to make all things new and make the way to heaven new.
- How do you see these three teachings apply to your life?

January 13-14, 2024



## Servant and Growing as a Guide

### Time:

- How will you apply these teachings to your life? Take time this week to do a personal inventory of how you are connecting to the new ways of Jesus. Are you focused on Him and his will, or are you focused on the old and how it used to be done?

## Closing Prayer

## Popcorn Prayer

- One person begins and ends the prayer, or one begins and another ends. The remaining group members take turns offering petitions at random, ending with “And...” to cue the next person. (NOTE: No one is obligated to speak.)

# JESUS' PARABLE *of the* SOWER

January 20-21, 2024

## Opening Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
Our minds are always full of distractions.  
Help us focus today on your message.  
Clear our minds so that we are ready to  
hear your messages for us.  
Amen.

## Time to Catch Up and Connect

What was the best thing that happened  
to you this week? What happened to you  
this week, that you would have preferred  
not to have happened? How did God  
work in your life this week?

## Ice Breaker

In Mark 4:1-20, a crowd is listening to  
Jesus preach. Perhaps not unlike a  
congregation listening to their pastor  
preach. Think about how members of a  
congregation listen to a sermon. Think  
about how you listen to a sermon.

- What are the distractions that make  
hearing a sermon and retaining its  
message difficult?

## Study

### Read Mark 4:1-20

Jesus tells a lovely parable about growing  
believers. What is Jesus saying to you in  
these verses? Is He asking you to do  
something?



Jesus graciously gives people the gift of  
faith. He also gives us the amazing privilege  
of sharing His good news with others. But  
not everyone listens in the same way, and  
not all situations are conducive to listening.

- What are some life distractions that  
Jesus says make retaining and acting on  
His message of faith difficult?
- Which of these distractions do you see  
in your life?
- What specific practical action can you  
take to avoid these distractions and  
stay “firmly planted in the good soil?”
- What specific action can you take, so  
that when you share God’s message  
with others, they will have the best  
chance to listen/hear what you are  
saying?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

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- This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page, providing a template for writing or drawing. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

## This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Thank you for your gift of faith. You have blessed us with the ability to hear and understand your Word. You have instructed us to share your Word with others. Show us how to use our unique talents to be effective witnesses for you and your kingdom. Amen.



**January 27-28, 2024**

### Opening Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
Be with us as we study your Word. Keep us focused on the message you have for us today. Amen.

### Time to Catch Up

- What was the best thing that happened to you this week? What happened to you this week, that you would have preferred not to have happened? How did God work in your life this week?

### Ice Breaker

Demon possession, ummm... Are you thinking of the many hyped-up scary movies, like *The Exorcist*? Yikes! What is the scariest movie you've seen? Why was it so scary?

### Study

#### Read Mark 5:1-20

- This is one of several instances where Jesus confronts demons. Why do you think there are verse/stories like this in the Bible? (See also Romans 8:37-39.)
- Jesus is a powerful figure in this story. Take a moment to comment on his power and list His actions displayed in this story.
- How Jesus' actions and power in this story relate to our lives today? How?

- As you read this story, what verses are most important for you? What message do you hear?
- Do you feel that Jesus is urging you to act based upon the time you have spent with this lesson? How will you react?
- What questions does this story raise for you?

Sometimes imaginations run wild when it comes to the topic of demon possession. Clearly, demons existed in Jesus' time. What about today? Do demons exist? The Bible does not always give us the answers we are seeking. We may have to be satisfied knowing that some questions will only be fully answered when we get to Heaven. In the meantime, Romans 8:37-39 is a terrific verse to keep in mind.

### Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
Thank you for your compassion for your people. Just as you healed the man of his demons in the verses we studied, you continue to heal and restore the bodies and minds of your people today. Thank you for strengthening our faith through encouraging stories like this. Give us confidence and courage to share with others how you have been merciful to us.  
Amen.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# APPENDIX

## GROUP PARTICIPANT QUARTERLY CLOSE DISCUSSION GUIDE

These questions are for groups to discuss at the close of each study or, at a minimum, at the close of the quarter. Consider planning a relaxed discussion over food. The hope is that the conversation will serve two purposes. First, give God praise and glory for all He has done in and among us. Second, be an encouragement for each other as you share God-sightings and spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

**1. Share an UP, IN, or OUT story from your group this past quarter.** (Storyteller measure)

These could be big or small ways you have seen God show up. Your group may have one or many stories. Each story is a win! Give space and time for each question below.

a. **UP to God** (Child of God and Learner measures) What UP stories stood out to you from your group this quarter? Thought starters: How did you see God at work in your life this quarter? What has God been teaching you through His Word? How have you grown in prayer? What have you learned about God or yourself this quarter?

**2. IN a family of believers** (Friend measure) What IN stories stood out to you from your group this quarter? Thought starters: How did the group encourage one another? Care for one another? Teach one another? Carry each other's burdens? (John 13:34, Rom. 12:10, James 5:16, Eph. 4:32, Rom. 14:13, Rom. 12:16, Rom. 15:7, Gal. 5:13, Gal. 6:2, Eph. 4:2, Col. 3:16, Heb. 10:24, 1 Thes. 5:11)

a. **OUT to a hurting world** (Friend and Servant measures) Summarize how the group reached out this quarter. Thought starters: Who did you invite to the group? How did you build relationships with others outside of the group? How did you serve people outside of the group this quarter?

**3. How are you doing balancing the UP, IN, and OUT components?** Where are you strong? Where are you weak?

**4. Based on this discussion, what do you think God is calling your group to do next?** Is it a topic to study? A new or deepened service to others? A new or deepened relationship with others? Explain.

# APPENDIX

## ABOUT PEACE GROUPS

PEACE groups bring people together to enjoy each other, learn how to live like Jesus-followers in daily life, and support one another on life's journey. They meet weekly or twice a month and are led by trained leaders. About 3-12 people are typically in a group. They meet in homes, at restaurants, or on the Prince of Peace campus.

**PEACE stands for the essential elements of every group...**

### **P – Prayer**

Members pray for and with one another.

### **E – Evangelism**

Group members look to invite and bring new friends to the group. Newcomers are always welcome!

### **A – Apprenticing**

Leaders mentor individuals for future leadership. As more people join and new groups are formed, the need for more trained leaders increases.

### **C – Christ-study**

Groups discuss the Bible with the goal of not only knowing Jesus but becoming more like Him and doing what He did.

### **E – Encouragement**

Groups are positive and uplifting where you are supported in your faith journey and personal life struggles.

To find out about joining a group or starting one, visit [www.pop.church](http://www.pop.church) or contact Discipleship Pastor, Matt Koenig ([matt@pop.church](mailto:matt@pop.church) or 847-359-3451 ext. 122.)

# APPENDIX

## LEADER TIPS

Before you start: Be sure to give people a copy of the study. Long passages in the upcoming study should be read ahead of group time if at all possible. Preparing answers ahead of time is not required, however, some people in the group may prefer to read ahead in order to have more time to think about their responses.

Each session is written to take approximately 75-90 minutes. However, you may tailor the material to the needs and length of your group time.

Don't feel obligated to get through all the questions. The point is for the study to get through you, NOT for you to get through the study! Therefore, good discussion on fewer questions rather than brief answers on more questions is encouraged.

Involve group members as often as possible in Scripture readings, hosting, prayer, and facilitating questions.

You will need index cards or small pieces of paper on occasion. Keep some on hand.





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