

## LITURGY FOR LIFE: SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

written by Paddy McCoy

### WEEK ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with, or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

**LITURGIES:** Worship, Celebration, Lament

#### OPENING QUESTION(S)

What are some liturgies or practices that you use that help you draw nearer to God and put Christ at the center of your life, of your day? What are some that are harder for you to practice, or you feel you understand the least?

#### HEAD & HEART

1. Read Romans 12:1-2 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
2. WORSHIP - According to Romans 12, what is worship? Try to put it in your own words.
3. WORSHIP - What do you think God's will is for you? How does worship help you get more in tune with that will?
4. Read Psalm 8:1-9, Ephesians 1:3-8 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
5. CELEBRATION - In a world with struggle and strife, how would you define what it means to celebrate God and how might celebration help refocus your energies for a day? Have you had a Psalm 8 moment, staring into the vastness of God's creation? If so, what do those moments teach you about God, you, creation?
6. CELEBRATION - When in life is it difficult to practice celebration? How might celebration help in those moments?
7. Read Lamentations 3:17-20, 21-24 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
8. LAMENT - Can you now, or have you had a season in life, where you could identify with the author of Lamentations? Why do you think practicing lament is as important as worship and celebration?
9. LAMENT - Sometimes you're able to say to yourself what our author says in verses 21-24, other times you need to be surrounded by others who can remind you of these truths. Where do you turn when you lament?

#### HANDS

Each week in this series, we will challenge you to spend time actually practicing the liturgies discussed in the week. So for this week, take a day to find ways to worship and celebrate, throughout the day. Notice God and who He is, what He's done for you. And take a day, maybe a morning or evening of quiet, and pour your heart out to God in lament. Give God time to speak back to you, hold you, comfort you.

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### LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK

*3 All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. 4 He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, NLT

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### WEEK TWO

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with, or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

**LITURGIES:** Rest - Sabbath, Promised, Jubilee, An Attitude

#### OPENING QUESTION(S)

What is true, reuse wanting rest for you? What does it take for you to truly rest? Think of circumstances, state of your heart, practices, etc...

#### HEAD & HEART

1. Read Exodus 20:8-11 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
2. SABBATH REST - Knowing how busy and hectic our lives would get, why do you think God setup Sabbath as a part of our rhythm to life? Holy means set apart, so what about Sabbath sets apart those who practice it?
3. Read Hebrews 4:1-2, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
4. PROMISED REST - Why would they "tremble with fear" for those that fail to experience God's promised rest? What might rest and listening have to do with each other? What promises come with God's rest?
5. Read Leviticus 25:1-5, 8-11 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
6. JUBILEE REST - What does the term "a complete rest" mean to you? What would you do to experience a complete rest? Jubilee seemed like a complete rest. What are ways we can practice a similar type of reset? It is said that the people of Israel never really observed a year of Jubilee. Why do you think that was hard for them to do?
7. Read Isaiah 30:15 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
8. ATTITUDE OF REST - Is there a way to experience an attitude of rest outside of the boundaries of a Sabbath day? How?
9. Read Jeremiah 6:16-17, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
10. STOP & LISTEN - What might stopping and listening have to do with entering God's rest? What are some ways we can practice these things?

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### **HANDS**

Each week in this series, we will challenge you to spend time actually practicing the liturgies discussed in the week. So for this week, think about a daily practice to enter into an attitude of rest before you get going on your day; maybe it means surrendering your plans, choosing to trust in God over your own efforts. Then, this Sabbath, what can you do to make it special, holy, set apart not as a burden, but as an opportunity to enter into His rest/presence?

### **LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK**

*28 Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”*

Matthew 11:28-30, NLT

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### WEEK THREE

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with, or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

**LITURGIES:** Confession & Forgiveness, Process and Patience, Bold Forgiveness, Forgiveness and Resurrection

#### OPENING QUESTION(S)

What...

#### HEAD & HEART

1. Read Matthew 6:9-14, 1 John 1:5-10 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
2. **CONFESS&ION & FORGIVENESS** - What tense is the line about us forgiving others in the Lord's prayer? Do you think God's forgiveness is dependent on our ability to forgive others? If so, explain. If not, then what do you think Jesus was getting at with this part of the prayer?
3. **CONFESS&ION & FORGIVENESS** - We often think of confession as a very private matter, but there are times when we are to confess to one another (James 5:16). How could public confession be a good thing? And who is the faithful one in verse 9 of I John 1? Why might remember his faithfulness in our unfaithfulness be important?
4. Read Psalm 32:1-5 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
5. **PROCESS & PATIENCE** - It has been said that our secrets keep us sick. How would this line apply to confession and what is the joy the psalmist speaks to once confession has happened? How might confession be good for the body, whereas secrets hurt it?
6. Read Hebrews 4:14-16 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
7. **BOLD FORGIVENESS** - When you have sinned, hurt you or someone else or your walk with God, do you come to Him boldly or as if you're on eggshells? If eggshells, what do you think that means about how you picture God? Is He for you or against you?
8. Read 2 Timothy 2:8-11 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
9. **FORGIVENESS & RESURRECTION** - Consider for a moment how forgiveness and new life is connected not just in the future when Jesus comes, but right here and now? Jesus said He came to give us life to the full, both in the kingdom to come as well as the kingdom that is here now. How might the promise of forgiveness free you from sin controlling your life, but also give you hope?

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### **HANDS**

Each week in this series, we will challenge you to spend time actually practicing the liturgies discussed in the week. So for this week, take some time to write out your sins, your struggles, those things that you may feel are keeping you from walking with Jesus, or those things weighing you down and holding you back from living the full life. Once you're done writing, pray and release them over to Jesus in some tangible way - rip the paper up, burn it, bury it, whatever you need to do. Then just spend time resting in the beauty of being forgiven.

### **LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK**

*10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 11 And they shall not teach, each one his neighbor and each one his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. 12 For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."*

Hebrews 8:10-12, ESV

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### WEEK FOUR

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with, or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

**LITURGIES:** Prayer, Fasting, Solitude, Silence, Statio/Stand Still

#### OPENING QUESTION(S)

When you pray, what do you picture or imagine? Do you imagine a person, a place, a concept like light or space? Explain.

#### HEAD & HEART

1. Read Luke 18:9-14 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
2. PRAYER - What do you think it means to be humble in prayer? Jesus said in his sermon on the mount that you are not heard by your many words for God knows what you need before you ask. so why ask? Does prayer have to include words?
3. Read MATTHEW 6:16-18 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
4. FASTING - Fasting isn't defined in Scripture as much as other disciplines and liturgies, but it is mentioned often. It was such a part of their lives that they didn't need to explain it, they just did it. Have you ever fasted? If so from what and for how long? Is fasting just getting rid of something for a time, or is it also replacing that thing with someone else? If so, what?
5. Read Luke 5:15-16, Mark 1:35, John 12:36 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
6. SOLITUDE - Why do you think Jesus practice withdrawing and going to quiet places so often? In our world of constant noise, what makes it hard to withdraw, and what benefits may come from it for us?
7. Read Psalm 62:1-2, 5-7 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
8. SILENCE - Have you ever just sat in silence before the Lord? If so, what was that experience like? How might silence and waiting go together as the psalmist suggest?
9. Read Matthew 11:28-30, together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
10. STATIO - Our lives are so fast-paced. What are some tangible ways you could seek to practice Statio, reminding yourself throughout the day to take note of God's presence and activity in your life and the world around you?

#### HANDS

Each week in this series, we will challenge you to spend time actually practicing the liturgies discussed in the week. So for this week, try to spend time with God in a way that maybe

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you've never tried before, or a way that you know is hard for you. Try it daily, push through the uncomfortable, ask God for His help, and see what you think about the practice at the end of the week, as well as how you feel about your walk with Jesus before this week versus after it.

### LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK

*1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.*

Luke 18:1, ESV

*16 Always be joyful. 17 Never stop praying. 18 Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NLT

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### WEEK FIVE

#### INTRODUCTION

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion between you and the person you're studying with, or with your Connect Group. Feel free to add, subtract, or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

**LITURGIES:** Gratitude, Hospitality, Secrecy, Reflection

#### OPENING QUESTION(S)

Take a moment to think about 5 things in your life that you are thankful for right now and why. Then share them with the group.

#### HEAD & HEART

1. Read Colossians 3:15-17 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
2. GRATITUDE - Why do you think gratitude is an important liturgy/practice in our world and in our walk with God? What benefits come with living with an attitude of gratitude? What are ways to practice gratitude each day?
3. Read Luke 22:17-19 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
4. HOSPITALITY - What opportunities do you and I have to practice hospitality to others each day? Is hospitality just hosting people for a meal, or could it be done even in a short interaction with someone else? The root of hospitality is hospital, so how does caring for the needs of others, daily, help draw us near to God?
5. Read Matthew 6:1, 3-4 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
6. SECRECY - In a world of social media and trying to prove to the world how good of a person you are, or at least to get people to notice you, what do you think practicing the art of secrecy can do for your relationship to others and to God? Are there areas in your life right now that maybe don't need to go public, but could just be between you and God? If you can think of one, share with the group.
7. Read John 8:31-32 together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
8. REFLECTION - Reflecting on our journey, our choices, is supercritical when hoping to grow. Can you think of a way to practice reflecting on your spiritual journey on a regular basis? How might this help your walk with Jesus?
9. Read Matthew 11:27-30 (MSG) together and share any wisdom, insights, or thoughts that come to you from the reading? What stands out?
10. These liturgies and practices are all about trying to establish a rhythm of a life with Jesus, day in, day out, moment to moment. We don't want to put God in a box that we take out one day a week. Liturgies are about living life with God, always. So as we close out this

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series, what are 1-2 practices that you've learned more about, that you'd like to start doing more often? Share with the group for accountability.

### **HANDS**

Each week in this series, we will challenge you to spend time actually practicing the liturgies discussed in the week. So for this week, for fun, do something for a coworker, or even a complete stranger, without them knowing about it. Pay for a coffee, clean up a work space, just make sure it's anonymous. If you want, leave a card that simply says, showing God's love for you in a tangible way. Then reflect on the experience in your prayer time with God.

### **LIVING WORDS FOR YOUR WEEK**

*13 And he went up on the mountain and called to him those whom he desired, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him...*

Mark 3:13-14a, ESV