

FUSION
HOUSE
ECCLESIA
RCHES



fusion house church resources

FUSION HOUSE CHURCHES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page03: SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS; THREE QUESTIONS

Page04: FHC MISSION IMAGINED

Page05: FHC VALUES

Page07: WHY "HOUSE CHURCHES"?

Page08: FHC LEADERS

Page10: FHC ELEMENTS

Communion/Shared Meal

Scripture

Prayer

Activism - 30 Days of Prayer

Cooperative Serving

Multiplication

Page13: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Fusion Directory

FHC Maps & Contact Information

FHC Prayer Notes

FHC Journal Pages

Lectio Divina

Imaginative Meditation

Scripture Reading Calendars

The Jesus Prayer

30 Days of Prayer: Additional Discerning Tools

EVERYONE . . . ENTERING INTO SPIRITUAL FRIENDSHIPS

It is our hope that each person within Fusion (and beyond) might know a deep life with God—and a growing friendship with others. We believe those friendships—defined by loving one another—will have spiritual roots. We believe that spiritual friendships are ones where forgiveness is present, where suffering is shared, where moments are common, and where life is given. We also believe that within those friendships individuals are known by one another, vulnerable with one another, and responsible for one another. We believe that within those friendships—hard words are spoken, wise words are given, and encouraging words flow, a caring touch or embrace is offered, and sometimes quiet, compassionate presence is all that is needed.

What do you imagine a spiritual friendship to look like?

How do you see God moving you toward that image in your relationships?

We believe that spiritual friendships don't just mistakenly happen—but they emerge and flourish within intentional moments. Our most focused moments for cultivating spiritual friendships are found our Fusion House Churches. Douglas Rumford, in *Soul Shaping*, defines a spiritual friendship as a Christ-centered, intentional relationship between at least two people, where these individuals focus on the nurture of each other's spiritual life. According to Rumford, this sort of friendship does not require one to be an expert, but simply to be spiritual peers who regularly come together and commit themselves to growing in Christ. David Benner, taking the lead from the spiritual writer, Margaret Guenther, adds more to this by defining spiritual friendship as “a gift of hospitality, presence and dialogue” given to another.

It's interesting that the ancients viewed friendship as the very crown of life. C.S. Lewis saw friendship as one of the four human loves, rich in its capacity to bring out the multi-faceted beauty of God in an intimate circle of relationship among “kindred souls”. So much is lost when we settle for the safety of “hang-out buddies” who never enter our souls, who never challenge us to grow, who never allow God's glory to be reflected through genuine humility, sacrificial love and an enduring commitment to our well-being and growth.

THREE QUESTIONS TO SPUR THESE FRIENDSHIPS

The following questions are ones we will explore in each of our house churches. Our hope is that these questions might help spur spiritual friendships with one another. Pondering and responding to such questions lead us to become even more conversant and aware of the work of God in us—and within one another. It is vital that we don't simply speak our answers to these questions and check out for the rest of the night—but that we see our role as listening and even participating and encouraging God's direction in the other group members.

Let these questions lead
the time during house
church.

***SPIRITUAL**

*In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting?
What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?*

***INCARNATIONAL**

*What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How
did you respond?
Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others?
Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?*

***TRANSFORMATIONAL**

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?

HOUSE CHURCHES IMAGINED

***"Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple,
and breaking bread from house to house,
they were taking their meals together
with gladness and sincerity of heart."***

ACTS 2:42

IMAGINE

What would it look like to live out our life with others daily ("day by day")? What parallels can you draw from the life of the early believers to your life?

Our lives are often strung out—distant—and too busy to find connection with others. How is God calling us to fight against those "typical patterns" and live out a new way?

Do you see the new way forming around you? Are you taking steps to personally see a shared life emerge?

MISSION: Fusion House Churches are created to regularly place us in environments to be known, to be active, and to be transformed together.

Fusion House Churches are not guaranteed to produce life with God and shared life with others . . . yes, we must admit this. However, the design of the FHC is to create an environment that gives each one of us, and those not with us yet, opportunities to flourish in our life with God—and our life together.

How will you be responsible to see the ongoing success of your house church?

PRAYER

We have a responsibility to each other, but this responsibility never demands of us to transform—only God transforms. We must serve and pray. We must be present and petition His presence. We must listen and act. But we must also be dependent upon God to take action.

Write out a prayer that parallels the "Our Father". Use your own words and consider specifically how this prayer could be directed toward your house church.

***Our Father in Heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
[For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever.] Amen.***

VALUES WE CELEBRATE, LIVE, AND ASPIRE TOWARD

SHARED LIFE

KOINONIA

KOINONIA. The Biblical word, koinonia, means “to have in common” or “to share”. This word is often translated “fellowship”, as in Acts 2:42. This fellowship is neither shallow nor fake. True koinonia is meant to accurately reflect the love of God within authentic and sacrificial relationships. Believers are challenged by many references to living life together in specific ways in the context of “one another”.

Which “one another” have you seen present within our community? Who has exemplified this action? How have you been affected by their obedience? How could you encourage them?

ONE ANOTHERS. LOVE one another, ENCOURAGE one another, ACCEPT one another, BE DEVOTED TO one another, FORGIVE one another, BE KIND TO one another, SPEAK TRUTH TO one another, LIVE IN PEACE WITH one another, SERVE one another, COMFORT one another, BE HUMBLE TO one another, BE UNIFIED WITH one another, CARRY THE BURDENS of one another

BELONGING

We hope to always have people who are lost, people who are not sure, people who are entering into a relationship with Christ, and the maturing believer, all active and participating within the community context. As House Churches, we need to always expect and welcome each person into shared life.

BELONGING PRECEEDS BELIEVING. A person can enter into and participate within our community before making any commitments. It is in the process of doing life and building experiences with believers that God often uses to “awake the soul” of the spiritually thirsty . . . BELIEVING PRECEEDS ACCOUNTABILITY. A person cannot be accountable for Christian belief and practice before becoming a Christian . . . ACCOUNTABILITY IS FOUND IN MEMBERSHIP WITHIN THE COMMUNITY. Membership within the Fusion community leads to an accountability within the NT expectations.

HOSPITALITY

HOSPITALITY IS NOT SOMETHING YOU DO—IT’S SOMETHING YOU BECOME. Opening our lives is tough—but making it a part of our life to be open to the stranger is certainly overwhelming at times. Fusion began with hospitality—we pray that we will share this passion to open our lives and welcome others in.

Practice the IMAGINATIVE MEDITATION exercise on the Matthew 9:9-13. What family, friends, and neighbors might you picture at the party? How is God leading you to “Carry Christ” to them?

“May we consistently be welcoming others into a hospitable collision with Christ and Cross. Let us live daily in the rhythms of Jesus, where moving over and experiencing the other, the stranger, become as natural as breathing.”

THE SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

Our dependence upon God is not only for salvation—but for everyday living. The spiritual movement is a life that has been marked with meaning. It is a life that acknowledges there is more than what it seen.

The spiritual movement within us is the life of intimacy with God. This is the movement that works within us to move beyond knowing about God or doing things in God’s name to a place where we are actively living with God. Serving and understanding must never be a substitute for intimacy with God—the actions of serving and understanding about God must work in concert with a life deeply connected to Him.

The spiritual movement is not generically spiritual but specifically a movement of Christ in us. Colossians chapter 2 describes the life with Him as one that grows in love and understanding. The Gospel of John describes life with God as the life of the branch connected and dependent upon the tree, “Abide in Me and I in you . . .”

What does it mean to you that following Christ is “distinctly spiritual”?

Life following Christ is distinctly spiritual. It is a life of listening to God, being aware of His leading. God is relational with us, not working from a distance, but working within us. Scripture says that God has given us His Spirit to be within us as we follow Him. One of the most important things Fusion can do as a community is introduce people to life as a spiritual movement with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

May we walk with Christ, dependent upon His movement within us.

THE INCARNATIONAL MOVEMENT

We are ambassadors for Christ, God making His appeal through us . . .

What images come to mind when you encounter “incarnational”? What movie scenes do you recall with “incarnational” themes?

God is missionary. He sent His Son into our world, into our lives, and into human history. He took on flesh and blood and fully identified with humanity.

Just as God has come to us—He sends us into everyday life to love and serve our friends, co-workers, family, strangers, and even enemies. Our lives are now the appeal that God makes to others. As a community we share together a life that goes into the world truly loving, humbly serving, and authentically living as a new community.

May we carry Christ into our everyday.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCHES – ARE WE REALLY CHURCHES?

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

*Each house church will be around 6 to 10 people. The goal is for the groups to be small enough to necessitate full participation—for no one to “slip through the cracks”.

*Each house church may consist of all ages with students, singles, marrieds, and families represented.

*Each group takes on unique responsibilities—continually being sensitive to God’s direction and the work He is doing within the group members’ lives. This means that every group functions cooperatively as Fusion—but also somewhat independently.

*Each group will determine the time/day and way in which the group meets.

*Every group will focus on Scripture, Prayer, and Worship—but will have freedom in the way they live these out.

*Each group will find a specific missional identity. The group will pray for God’s leading and determine its calling within our city to the “least, last, and lost”.

*Each group will serve within Fusion (the Sunday Gathering) as a rotating team along with the other groups.

* Each group leader will live out a pastoral/shepherding role among the group.

WHY DO WE CALL THEM HOUSE CHURCHES?

We believe that even a small gathering of Christ followers can be an expression of the Church.

“He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” 2 Corinthians 3:6

The Church is the Body of Christ represented both universally and locally. Local expressions of the Body of Christ are Christ followers who gather together around His mission of loving God and loving others. We recognize that as we gather together—we are living as the church—community, spiritual, and incarnational.

Don’t let this become a stale and distant account of the early church. Image the sights, the sounds, the scents captured within these moments. Imagine the people present—all ages, young and elderly, single and married. What was going on within the houses? Which description most resonates with you (“signs and wonders”, “breaking bread”, “day by day”, etc.)? Journal about your observations. Pray, asking God to do similar or even new things within your house church.

They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles. And all those who had believed were together and had all things in common; and they began selling their property and possessions and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need. Day by day continuing with one mind in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved. (From Acts 2)

HOUSE CHURCH LEADERS

MEETINGS

House Churches will meet weekly—at a time/day of the leaders choosing. While we know that there may be need to miss or even cancel—please make a commitment to lead by example in your regular attending/leading of your house church. Also, please communicate with the elders in advance (2 weeks when possible) any cancellations, location changes, or any other appropriate information.

Leader meetings will be monthly. This will be a time to communicate concerns and encouragements about your house church. The Monthly Leader Meetings will also be a time when calendars, events, and other resources will be shared.

When will my FHC meet (day/time)?
Where?

When will have leader meetings?
Where?

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

We want our time together within House Churches to be natural and casual—not rigid and overbearing. We want House Churches to feel more like “home” and less like a classroom—however, we also want the time to be meaningful and intentional. The following questions may help keep in mind the reasons for our house churches.

How do we get the children involved—how might we approach childcare?

How will we include the 3 Questions, a Shared Meal, Scripture, Prayer, Worship, and Missional Activism within our time?

Who do I see as a potential servant leader?

How am I moving people toward greater participation?

How are we keeping Christ the focus of all that we do?

How do we connect to the greater mission of ‘merging God & life’?

Is anyone becoming disconnected? How can we bring them in?

Is anyone in need of special care?

How am I placing my House Church into God’s care?

Are we ready to start a new group? Am I promoting the value of multiplication?

COMMUNICATION

Communication of Fusion activity is funneled more specifically through our House Churches. We’ll keep leaders informed on coming events and activities so they can pass on the information to each person within their house church.

STORIES

It is within smaller groups that most often stories are told—sharing what God is doing, or what is current within the lives of our people. As a leader within a house church—you will have many opportunities to hear and encourage these stories. As you hear what God is doing among your house church-, please remember to share those.

Are you listening for stories
within your house church?
What creative ways could
you share these stories
with others?

Many of the stories told might be an encouragement to our larger community.

HOSPITALITY

As leaders, you will often set the tone of the house church. Please always consider those who are new and “outside” the regular group, finding ways to make them feel most at ease and at home. You can set this tone by continually praying for and turning the thoughts of those within the house church to consider those who are not yet a part of the group.

Hospitality may also include creating opportunities (even outside of the regular House Church times) to invite friends to be around those in your house church. The Story of God is lived out—and transferred through our growing relationships.

SHARING RESPONSIBILITY

Consider how you can share the responsibilities within your house church. These are just a few roles that may be appropriate to share.

- * **Prayer**
- * **Communication/Emails/Notes**
- * **Events**
- * **Meals**
- * **Activism**

ELEMENTS WITHIN THE FUSION HOUSE CHURCH

SHARED MEAL/COMMUNION

There is something about sharing a meal together. Hosting, meal preparation, everyone bringing a contribution, and even the conversation at the table all have larger implications on the lives of those gathered at the table. Fusion House Churches are encouraged to gather around a meal—sitting down and making it an integral part of the evening together.

Taking communion together—traditionally, or even remembering the sacrifice of Christ during the meal leads us to build a greater sense of community, as the Body of Christ.

SCRIPTURE

Every house church will interact with Scripture and encourage spiritual exercises with Scripture in all of life. Each group will decide how they will interact with Scripture as a group. There are a variety of ways we can encourage each other to be around Scripture—reading, meditating, and ultimately being shaped by the Truth.

READING IN MASS

This is a practice of reading large amounts of Scripture per week. During the week everyone takes several chapters of a book and is responsible to complete the reading by the time of the next house church. The reading is large—and more than likely there will be some who cannot complete it. This is okay—because the group then rereads the same passages—until all in the house church have completed the reading. This allows for a repetition of reading that helps absorb the text.

LECTIO DIVINA

The “Divine Reading” of Scripture. This is a prayerful/meditative reading of the text. A house church may encourage each participant to meditate on an agreed upon passage for the week. The participant would then take time weekly to absorb the passage—and be open to the “shimmering words” that God may impress upon them. Our hope is to carry with us the words that God gives through the text and through our prayerful imagination. **[more in Resources section]**

READING CALENDAR

Developing a discipline of reading Scripture leads us to “hide the Word within our heart” in a unique way. The house church that follows a calendar for reading Scripture may choose together a reading for 30 days, a year, or a common lectionary reading. **[more in Resources section]**

IMAGINATIVE MEDITATION ON THE GOSPELS

This is the practice of prayerfully imagining the stories found within the Gospels. By using your imagination to interact with the narrative—God may make Himself known more fully. This exercise finds its roots in the ancient Ignatius Spirituality. **[more in Resources section]**

PRAYER

Every house church will incorporate prayer into its time together and encourage spiritual exercises with prayer in all of life.

PRAYER FOR HOUSEHOLD

Each week a rotating time of specific prayer will be led for each household (family, single, roommates, etc.). The entire house church will pray for the household by name and as specific as is appropriate.

PRAYER AS MEDITATION/INTIMACY/SPIRITUAL MOVEMENT

We encourage each house church to spend time around the ancient disciplines—discovering and experiencing a broad range of prayer exercises. You may encourage the Jesus Prayer, the Lord’s Prayer, or others.

SPECIFIC NEEDS/DIRECTED PRAYER

It will always be appropriate for the house church to stop and pray when hearing a need or sensing God at work. We encourage you to involve prayer around the meal and following times of vulnerability. We pray each house church would learn a sensitivity to God’s work within the moments together.

THE JESUS PRAYER

This ancient spiritual discipline can enable a greater awareness to the work and ways of God within our lives and our community. Consider engaging regularly in this exercise. **[more in Resources section]**

ACTIVISM

Our activism within our city must take on a spiritually guided element. We are leading each house church to begin first by participating together in 30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR OUR CITY. Once a new house church begins—those within the group will prayerfully discern their shared role within this city to the “least, the last, and the lost.” We believe that it is essential for ANY of our Incarnational Work to be borne out of our spiritual intimacy with God. Of course, there is no set way this happens—often even as we serve, we become more deeply aware of Christ. Therefore, we believe that the spiritual life can never be separated from our life of care and service.

CREATIVE GENEROSITY

We are seeking to find our unique roles and responsibilities within our city, both as a larger church—and also as smaller house churches. We believe that serving—any action is good—but finding God-led creative avenues of serving is best. We believe that there are places and people God wants to lead us to reach out to—to live along side. In Galatians 5:25 Paul describes the life of those who follow Christ as one that is literally guided by God, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.” Dean Brackley writes about a life that is guided by the spirit is one that practices creative generosity,

"To live by compassion in a world of infinite needs, we must weigh alternatives - discerning, deciding, and commending to God what we cannot achieve ourselves...it's about responding to reality under the guidance of the Spirit."

Being guided by the Spirit may not be stopping and praying, only—but it might look more like prayerfully living. We will stop and pray—but we must also be aware of God's work as we go through our daily life. It is often within those moments that we see the unique need that calls for our “creative generosity”.

And how do we know we are ready to act on those needs? Brennan Manning speaks to the issue of knowing when you have prayed “enough”, *“You know, those of us in the contemplative traditions believe that the most powerful thing that can happen in the place of prayer is that you leave the place of prayer as the eyes and the hands and the feet of Jesus . . . the most incredible miracle that can happen is that you yourself become the prayer.”*

30 DAYS OF PRAYER FOR ACTIVISM WITHIN OUR CITY

PRACTICAL IDEAS:

Over the coming weeks, within our weekly House Church meetings and Sunday Gatherings, we will begin to introduce some practical ideas for serving the least, last and lost, and for caring for our neighborhoods. We trust that God will use these ideas during our 30 DAYS OF PRAYER to spark creative ways He wants use our individual House Churches and our Fusion community as a whole to love and care for our city.

As we pray together within our house churches, we ask that you will begin to consider the following questions:

Where are we aware of need within our city?

What are the burdens I most often have for others around me?

If there were no limitations, how would I imagine caring for “the least, last, and lost” and my neighborhood?

As you find more tangible areas to serve, consider the following questions:

Who does our service impact?

What area/neighborhood is the focus of our service?

What need can we eliminate within our city?

How do you imagine our neighborhoods and/or city to be different through the action we take together?

COOPERATIVE SERVING

Each house church cooperates collectively as Fusion Church. Therefore, we see the value of joining together as a gathered people to worship, serve, generously give, and be identified together.

HOSTING SUNDAYS

Each House Church will be on a regular rotation to “host” the gathering. This hosting will include coming early to set up, prepare for Sparks, and staying after to tear down. Each host house church will also play a role within the gathering—reading, praying, sharing a story, and serving Communion. Each House Church will be on a regular rotation as host.

GLOBAL ENDEAVORS

As individual House Churches, there is a limit to what kind of role we can play in God’s work around the globe. But, as a collective of House Churches, we come together to form a global responsibility to embody Christ to others. Our entire community is driven by the call of God to go to the most remote places on the earth, to people who do not know the name of Jesus and have not experienced life with Him.

As we go, we will be focused on carrying the story of God, meeting real needs, going places no one else will, finding people of peace, encouraging local believers, praying for spiritual transformation, and celebrating God’s work together.

CONVERGENCE

Each House Church may consider specific ways in which it can connect with the overarching purposes for Convergence, which is hospitality and creativity, or “pursuing creativity & community”. We believe, at least part of our specific effort toward our city is to the art community. ***How might your house church play a practical role in continuing to create the environment of Convergence as one defined by true hospitality and creativity?***

MULTIPLICATION

We believe that our house churches can be areas of multiplication. Carrying in each house church the value of hospitality—welcoming the stranger and inviting others to join us will lead to a need for new house churches to emerge. Our house churches—as they multiply and take on unique callings within the city and continue to cooperate with the larger Fusion community will function, even in a small way, as “church plants”.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

Additional resources for the house church members and leaders. Each month we will distribute more resources to place within each house church participants books.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Small Group Leadership: As Spiritual Direction by Heather Webb (stories of spiritual direction within groups)

Connecting by Larry Crabb (to explore the depth of transformation inherent within community)

Organic Church by Neil Cole (house churches defined)

Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer (the rhythms of shared life)

Created for Community by Stanley Grenz (for building an overall theology of community)

The Kingdom of Couches: Fighting for Communal Faith in an Individual Age by Will Walker (stories of community)

Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction by Margaret Guenther

ADDITIONAL PAGES

While we will continually update the resource section with important articles, note pages, and calendars—we also want to begin with a few initial resources:

Fusion Directory

FHC Maps & Contact Information

FHC Prayer Notes

FHC Journal Pages

Lectio Divina

Imaginative Meditation

Scripture Reading Calendars

The Jesus Prayer

30 Days of Prayer: Additional Discerning Tools

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES
PRAYER CONCERNS, BURDENS, NEEDS, & THANKSGIVINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-5

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

***5**For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:7

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

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES
PRAYER CONCERNS, BURDENS, NEEDS, & THANKSGIVINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-5

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, **4** who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*

***5**For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:7

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

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

“No one can walk without a guide.” - Augustine

“Direction is listening with a sense of reverence, respect, and awe at God’s work and the individuals story.” - Margaret Guenther

A few thoughts on Spiritual Direction from *Small Group Leadership: As Spiritual Direction* by Heather Webb:

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION WADES THROUGH THE MYSTERY OF GOD

“Emily Dickinson said that mystery is the greatest need in the human soul. So what happens to us—especially those of us whose lives are shaped by belief in God, ‘immortal, invisible, God only wise/in light inaccessible hid from our eyes’—when the vocabulary and syntax of mystery have been excised from our language and the only words left to us for conversing about God and our souls have to do with function and information? We ask God to do something (reducing Him to a function) or ask him what he is doing (giving him a job as clerk in an information booth). But not with the happiest of results. Anyone who ventures to ask God for anything at all is soon asking parents or pastors or friends why there is ‘no answer.’ But there is an answer. Spiritual direction is in the business of discerning the signs of God’s work and attending to the way that God answers.” Eugene Peterson (9)

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION DEFINED

“Spiritual direction is the ancient art of being with another person in their relationship with God. As the church struggles to be a place in which we develop meaningful and lasting relationships, this spiritual practice has much to offer. It is another way of patiently sitting with another soul as we listen for God’s voice and look for God’s leading. Answers to life’s difficult questions can come in the space direction creates between people who are present to one another in the presence of God.” (18)

A SPIRITUALLY THIRSTY CULTURE

“There is large segments of the population that are dissatisfied with the church, wounded by the institution. They are trying to find room in their theology for the questions and doubt that have surfaced in the course of their lives. It is a critical time for the church to honor the seekers, to invite them to God and community in the midst of their wanderings, not once they get it all figured-out. The spiritual hunger of this age presents an opportunity for us to offer a seat at the table and a cup of warm soup to those who know they are in need.” (23)

THE ULTIMATE PICTURE OF SMALL GROUPS

“The people (of a small group) come with a desire to learn about themselves and are open to feedback in the group setting. They are willing to risk receiving from and offering to one another despite their uncertainty about how they will be perceived. Tears and laughter are shared and celebrated. There is a delightful sense of freedom about these kinds of groups as people begin to live into their dreams. In some ways, small groups are Outward Bound for the soul. They engage all of our senses and demand that we stay present and open to others.” (27)

STORY: CREATING A LEVEL OF COMFORT

“To help group members develop a level of comfort with the ambiguity of faith, spiritual directors need to create safe spaces for discussing spiritual matters. Story telling, for example, allows the group to talk about faith as it really plays out rather than in idealistic, abstract terms. In time, the group becomes comfortable with the idea that they are in the midst of their own stories, stories that are far from over.” (62)

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION CONNECTS US INWARD, OUTWARD, AND UPWARD

“Good direction will help to reconnect people with their bodies and emotions. It can help a sinner know God by grace with freedom and responsibility. As Kenneth Leech describes it, direction is healing, transforming, and reconciling as sinners are liberated from bondage as they move toward freedom. This freedom allows us to more truly love others. Rather than seeing directions as a movement inward, it should be seen as the process of moving upward and outward toward God and others.” (67)

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

30 DAYS OF PRAYER: DISCERNMENT TOOL

Adapted for Fusion from Beyond the Ordinary: Spirituality for Christian Leaders by Ben Cambell Johnson and Andrew Dreticer

As we prepare to engage the problems of our neighborhoods, we want to do so as a community that is unified in spirit and in mind. In the face of a world in great need, it is easy to give ourselves so wholly to the mission that our serving God can replace our knowing God. We have hope that we would see together a transformation within us and within our city. We do not engage in the mission FOR God. We engage mission WITH God.

Because our work is WITH God—we must make sure we are listening to Him—sensitive to His way of seeing our city and willing to join His work in our city. As we begin our Fusion House Churches we also begin a season of discernment—group listening to God. Discernment is the process by which we distinguish the movement of the Spirit among us. We are seeking God’s leading within our community on behalf of those who are the “least, last, and lost” of our city. Every house church will engage in this process of discernment.

LISTEN

Seeking God’s guidance involves listening for His voice. Just like listening for anything else, listening means stopping and silencing the noise. As you listen, how do you sense God inviting you to participate in reaching out to our city?

WATCH

Seeking God’s guidance also involves watching. Believing that God is in our midst, watching the process by which we seek to see God in the world around us. As you watch the local news, read the local paper, or talk to neighbors and local friends, where do you see God? How might He be asking you to join Him in redeeming your community?

PREPARE

Listening and watching for God’s leading doesn’t keep us from getting ready for what He will invite us to do. It can often be an experience that helps us understand what God’s leading is for us. Are you ready to enter into this season of discernment with your house church?

QUESTIONS TO AID OUR AWARENESS

What is God telling us through our experiences, surroundings, passions, and burdens?

SURROUNDINGS. What is God already doing in our neighborhood that we can join in? What needs attention in our neighborhood that we could address?

STORY. How has my story prepared me to engage our city? What does my story tell us about what God may be calling us to do?

PASSIONS & GIFTS. What stirs my heart as it relates to the redemptive work of Christ in our city? What skills, abilities, and resources do I have to offer in this work?

PROCESS FOR DISCERNMENT

Discernment may be a new process for you, so here are a few methods on how to begin. First, if we seek to discern God’s heart and join ourselves to it, it is very important that we repent of anything that could keep us from seeing or hearing clearly.

PRAYER FOR REPENTANCE. Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, for the fame of the One True God.

Over the 30 days, we invite you to regularly practice the Daily Examen.

EVENING PRAYER OF EXAMEN FROM ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA.

Recall that you are in God's presence:

Quiet yourself and sit comfortably, recalling that you are in God's presence. Ask the Spirit to help you look at your life with love this day.

Look at your day with gratitude:

After a few moments, begin to thank God for the gifts of the day. Think of the small pleasures of your day. Then recall how you were a gift today. Thank God for these things.

Ask for help:

In a moment you will review your day and how you responded to God's gifts. Before doing so, ask the Spirit to join you and help you look at your actions clearly and with understanding.

Review your day:

Think through your day from the moment you awoke until now.

Ask, when did I fail?

When did I love?

What habits/patterns did I exhibit?

What are the positive and negative?

How did you engage mission today?

Where could you have engaged mission today but didn't?

Reconcile and Resolve:

Remember the good decisions of your day and thank God.

Remember the poor decisions of your day and feel sorrow for them.

Ask for God's grace for tomorrow.

Finish by acknowledging again that you are in God's presence.

DISCERNING AS A GROUP

During our Fusion House Churches we will explore how God might be calling us to join His work within our city.

SILENT MOMENTS TOGETHER. Ask everyone to become silent and still, close their eyes, and begin to consider the significant aspects of our mission as Christ followers and the needs of our city.

IMAGINING FROM THE GOSPELS. Another way in which we can be more fully aware of God's work is seeing Jesus at work in the Gospels. Take a story of Christ's miracles, calling others to follow and engage the story personally. Is God showing you more clearly how He is at work within our city?

LISTENING TO OTHERS STORIES. There are many other people and places who are joining the work of God among their city. Consider stories you are hearing—How are they resonating with you in regard to our work in this city? Do these same actions translate to our city—meeting the needs of our “least, last, and lost” groups?

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

IMAGINATIVE MEDITATION: A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE FROM ST. IGNATIUS

Note: This spiritual exercise and its instruction, is taken almost exclusively from the book "Inner Compass" by Margaret Silf. The material below can be found inside chapter 14 entitled "To Love You More Dearly."

"Ignatius teaches us how to open ourselves up to intimacy with God through Gospel-based meditation, through which we can, in our prayer, become participants in the life and ministry of Jesus and discover its reality for us where we are here and now."

SUGGESTED METHOD

1. Ask God to reveal himself to you; express your desire to experience Him.
2. Chose a passage from the Gospels. Read the passage several times until it is familiar and you feel at home with it.
3. Imagine that you are an active participant in the scene. What role do you find yourself taking in the scene? [For example, are you one of the disciples, a bystander, a person being healed etc]
4. Talk with the characters in the scene, especially with Jesus. Ask questions of them.
5. Listen inwardly to what God is showing you through your role in the scene.
6. Journal your thoughts.

THERE ARE ALWAYS TWO RULES:

1. Never moralize or judge yourself
2. Always respond from your heart and not from your head...our purpose in prayer is not to defend or condemn ourselves or to come up with any kind of analysis or sermon, but simply to respond, from our inmost depths, to what God is sharing with us of himself.

HOW CAN I BE SURE?

How can I be sure that this is prayer and not just a flight or fantasy? How do I know my experience is of God?

To answer that question you may find it helpful to apply these simple tests:

1. Has my meeting with the Lord in this way made any difference to my way of being present in the world? Has it opened my eyes in any way, either to my own ways of acting and responding to others, or to the needs and vulnerability of other people around me? Remember that evidence of a good prayer life is not abundant experiences of God, but rather growth in the fruit of the Spirit. Experiences of God have to lead to action; they have to make a difference in your own life and in the life of this community.
2. Is there a sense of consistency between what I feel I have been shown in this prayer time and the way I feel the Lord is dealing with me in my life in other ways? If your prayer seems to send you off on a tangent and suggest a decision that is out of line with your personality or commitments, then it is wise to be cautious. God's ways are usually [but not always] gentle, and they are reliably consistent.
3. Does the prayer leave me feeling basically at peace [even though it may have confronted me with hard challenges] and does the sense of peace continue as time goes on? When we follow our daydreams the sense of satisfaction is invariably short lived. When the dreams are God's dreams for us, the peace is a lasting one, which will keep recurring and strengthening in our prayer.

FINDING GOD IN ALL THINGS

The more time you put into these spiritual exercises [like Imaginative Meditation or the Examen of Consciousness] the more you will begin to see God all around you in your everyday life. "There is a marvelous bonus waiting for those who entrust themselves to God in intimate prayer...steadily, he will open up more and more of himself to you – or rather, he will increasingly open up your inner vision, to notice him in everything around you and to recognize his presence in every moment."

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

THE JESUS PRAYER

MOST CONTENT PARAPHRASED FROM "PRAYING WITH THE CHURCH"

There are records back to the fourth century of followers simply reciting the name of Jesus as a one word prayer. Soon after, some expanded to use the words of the tax collector in Jesus' parable, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" This prayer, and many versions of it, has become prominent particularly in the Eastern church. It has come to be known as the Jesus Prayer or the Prayer of the Heart.

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

The prayer is often used as an element of the pursuit of silence before God, the silence of centering on God. We become silent to return our hearts to God, to give full attention to the prayer itself, and to hear from God. The context of the Jesus Prayer is less often in public liturgy and more often in the private, silent devotion of everyday life. The Jesus Prayer is often prayed in rhythm with the beating of one's heart, repeating one word with each heartbeat.

St. Simeon recommended one..."sit alone and in silence; bow your head and close your eyes; relax your breathing and with your imagination look into your heart; direct your thoughts from your head into your heart. And while inhaling say, 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me,' either softly with your lips or in your mind. Endeavor to fight distractions but be patient and peaceful and repeat the process frequently."

In addition to focused, silent moments alone, the prayer can be used in the flow of everyday life to stop, remember, and recognize God. It can be spoken as a prayer of confession of sin or used as a cry in times of crisis. It is a prayer that can be offered when one wants or needs to pray, but is missing the words to speak. The prayer, though often spoken in private, is also the joining of the corporate chorus of millions of other followers praying the same prayer at the same time.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES

LECTIO DIVINA

(this is an abbreviated version—you can find the full description of the Lectio Divina article in “TheMerge”)

WHAT IS LECTIO DIVINA?

‘Lectio Divina’ (pronounced lex-ee-o; dih-vee-nah) means “divine reading”. It is classic approach to drawing near to God through meditating, praying, slowly and deliberately reading Scripture. This ancient practice has been kept alive in the Christian monastic tradition and has been described as one of the “precious treasures of the Benedictine monastics”.

WHY DOES FUSION PRACTICE LECTIO DIVINA?

We believe Scripture teaches that each follower of Christ has within him/her the very spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. Scripture teaches that every follower of Christ lives as a “new creation”—part of that new life is living a life—guided uniquely by the Holy Spirit and by the Scriptures.

Lectio Divina becomes a practice that is simply a tool to help us stop our busy lives and sit in meditation of Scripture. Lectio Divina is not meant to be a superstitious “trick” to be more spiritual. It is however, a valuable practice that can aid us in living a prayerful and aware life in God. It teaches us to be more aware of God, who He is, who He is making us to be, and how He will work in and through us. It makes us aware of God’s work within us through revealing our sin and building us up. It also makes us more aware of God’s plans for us to live out lives that tell the story of Jesus.

CULTIVATING BELONGING.

Using the practice of Lectio Divina in together in small groups is intended to develop the richness of community in all of our lives. FHC’s are for creating community—people together being belonging and embodying the “one anothers” of the New Testament. Lectio Divina in the group setting uniquely creates an environment for community to flourish.

EVERYONE IS VALUABLE.

While we acknowledge that every follower of Jesus has direct and complete access to God—we can pray to God and have a relationship with God through what Christ has accomplished on the cross; we also acknowledge that the church and the Holy Spirit is the intended protection against us living isolation and believing false doctrine. The reformers talked about “priesthood of all believers” (Hebrews 4:14-16; 9:24-28; 10:19-22; 1 Peter 2:5,9; 1 Timothy 2:5), for them it was never a question of a lonely, isolated seeker of truth, but rather of a band of faithful believers united in a common confession as a local, visible community.

GROWING DEEPLY SPIRITUAL.

Ultimately, Lectio Divina, as we practice it together and as it becomes formative in those within our community, we more naturally speak about spiritual things. As we regularly engage in a practice that places us before God in meditation, in prayer, and in Scripture, then we become more deeply spiritual people. We hope that answering questions like, “What do you perceive God doing in you/in community? What does God seem to be beginning or continuing in your life/in the life of our community?” become second nature within our conversations. It is important to be asking and answering these questions—and other questions like these—not in a scripted way, but as we become more aware people. One of Fusion’s values is to be a deeply spiritual community, in other words, growing in our awareness of God and where He may be working.

HOW DO YOU PRACTICE LECTIO DIVINA?

BEGIN WITH A PRAYER OF HUMBLE EXPECTATION. We may often come to the Scriptures as it is just any other book (textbook, novel, history, proverb, news, etc), but we must develop a humility when opening Scripture. When humility is present, we are acknowledging that “our thoughts are not God’s thoughts” and “our ways are not God’s ways”. So, when we are humble, we are ready to hear from God—hearing Him in such a way that will allow God to do all that He desires within us.

The prayer of humility may simply be “show us Jesus”, or asking for God’s presence and direction, or it could be praying a Psalm (Ps. 119 is very fitting) *“I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you . . . I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways. I delight in your decrees; I will not neglect your word.”*

LECTIO: SLOWLY AND DELIBERATELY READ THE SCRIPTURE PASSAGE ALOUD. Again, our approach to Scripture must be altogether different from the other reading we may do with the newspaper, an internet article, or an email. There is something about reading slowly and aloud that sets our focus more deeply on the text at hand.

MEDITATION: BE AWARE OF THE WORD OR PHRASE THAT STANDS OUT. The “shimmering word” or phrase is described by the Benedictines as something that “beckons you, address you . . . something that stirs, unnerves, disturbs, grabs, or touches you.” Mary, the mother of Jesus, is described in Luke 2 as “pondering in her heart” all that happened in Jesus’ birth and life. This is very similar to the action we take in Lectio Divina—it is meditating or becoming aware of the Word of God. Included in our meditation of the word or phrase that “shimmers” is our questions of “what ideas, feelings, images, come to mind when meditating on this word, phrase, or reading?”

PRAYER: COMMUNION WITH GOD Lectio Divina is prayer from beginning to end. But this is more focused prayer as a dialogue with God. In this prayer we allow the Word that we have taken in, and on which we are meditating, to touch and change ourselves deeply.

The moments we spend in prayer with God it is He that touches us most deeply, not the words spoken. We may be tempted for Lectio to produce something. We must remember that we should not bring to Lectio our agenda but find God’s work within us. Often the work that He may be doing in our time quietly before the Word will find the most meaning not in information but relationally, us and Christ.

CONTEMPLATION: TAKING IT WITH YOU Until this point, we may be tempted to simply practice reading and praying with no implication upon our living. It is in the final moments of this spiritual practice that we allow the time to set deeply within us, asking God to remind us and essentially carry Him with us throughout our day. When we end our time in Lectio Divina, we must not exit our life of prayer and awareness of God, but we should allow it to move us to a life of “pray(er) without ceasing”, essentially, living out a life of awareness and tenderness to God.

HOW DO YOU PRACTICE LECTIO DIVINA IN A GROUP SETTING?

THE BEGINNING PRAYER OF HUMILITY. We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us.

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE. Much like the personal practice of Lectio Divina, we read through a passage three times, slowly and deliberately. The reading can be done by multiple readers (different genders, in unison). NOTE: the questions that follow the reading are not intended to bring about a pool of knowledge of the text. By that we mean, we don’t really want the time to be centered around what everyone can tell us they know about the passage being read. Lectio Divina is an altogether different practice than the ‘Bible studies’ we may often be familiar with. In Lectio Divina, we are trying to focus mainly on how God may be speaking to a participant or the group together. It is intended to get to the heart of the implications of the reading in our lives and what it means to further community with God and each other.

After the first reading, the leader asks, “*What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?*” Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, “*What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?*” Then we give participants a chance to respond.

A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, “**How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?**”

THE FINAL TIME OF SHARING

The last reading of the passage opens up a more lengthy time of sharing and discussing within the group. The discussion should have freedom while mostly centering around the values, insights, questions, and perspective experienced within this hour. This may be best done in responding to the questions, “**What do you perceive God doing in you/in community?**”; “**What may God be beginning or continuing in you/in community?**” The FHC may often end in prayer for each person in the group or broken in smaller groups for prayer.

TAKING IT WITH YOU

Taking this time together with us may mean returning to the scripture passage throughout the week, or it could mean taking a few minutes to journal or blog about the experience, or it the importance of the meditation may live on as you share the story with someone else. It is not so important as to what you do to take the meditation with you—it is vital that you continue living within it—letting God shape you.



the gospel of john “I am” statement (The Bread of Life): JOHN 6:32-35

Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world." Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread." Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

Jesus describes Himself as the one who quenches humanities thirst.

*** How have you do you see Jesus quenching thirsts within this story?**

*** How have you experienced (or seen in others) Jesus being the ‘bread of life’—eliminating hunger?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 6:1-14 (MSG)

1-4 . . . a huge crowd followed him, attracted by the miracles they had seen him do among the sick. When he got to the other side, he climbed a hill and sat down, surrounded by his disciples. It was nearly time for the Feast of Passover, kept annually by the Jews. 5-6When Jesus looked out and saw that a large crowd had arrived, he said to Philip, "Where can we buy bread to feed these people?" He said this to stretch Philip's faith. He already knew what he was going to do. 7Philip answered, "Two hundred silver pieces wouldn't be enough to buy bread for each person to get a piece." 8-9One of the disciples—it was Andrew, brother to Simon Peter—said, "There's a little boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But that's a drop in the bucket for a crowd like this." 10-11Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." There was a nice carpet of green grass in this place. They sat down, about five thousand of them. Then Jesus took the bread and, having given thanks, gave it to those who were seated. He did the same with the fish. All ate as much as they wanted. 12-13When the people had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples, "Gather the leftovers so nothing is wasted." They went to work and filled twelve large baskets with leftovers from the five barley loaves. 14-15The people realized that God was at work among them in what Jesus had just done. They said, "This is the Prophet for sure, God's Prophet right here in Galilee!"

the meditation

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”; “What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”; “What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It's okay if you don't see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the Resurrection and the Life): JOHN 11:25

25Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies,

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

*** How do you see Jesus as the Resurrection and the Life?**

*** How does resurrection promise resonate with you?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 11:14, 32-44

14So Jesus then said to them plainly, “Lazarus is dead, . . . 32Therefore, when Mary came where Jesus was, she saw Him, and fell at His feet, saying to Him, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.” 33When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled, 34and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.” 35Jesus wept. 36So the Jews were saying, “See how He loved him!” 37But some of them said, “Could not this man, who opened the eyes of the blind man, have kept this man also from dying?” 38So Jesus, again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. 39Jesus said, “Remove the stone.” Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there will be a stench, for he has been dead four days.” 40Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” 41So they removed the stone Then Jesus raised His eyes, and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. 42“I knew that You always hear Me; but because of the people standing around I said it, so that they may believe that You sent Me.” 43When He had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth.” 44The man who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, “Unbind him, and let him go.”

the meditation

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”; “What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”; “What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It’s okay if you don’t see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the Son of God): JOHN 10:36

36do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

*** How does John the Baptist’s testimony resonate with you?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 1:29-34

29The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 30This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 31I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 32And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 33I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 34And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

the meditation

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”; “What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”; “What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It’s okay if you don’t see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the door): JOHN 10:07,09

John 10:9 - I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. John 10:7 - So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

- * **How does, Christ being ‘The Door’, find reality within the following story?**
- * **How does, Christ being ‘The Door’, resonate with your experience with God?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 4:39-42

Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in Him because of the woman’s testimony. “He told me everything I ever did.” So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of what you said, now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

the meditation:

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”**; **“What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”**; **“What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It’s okay if you don’t see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement: JOHN 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only [Son], who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. “Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 1:1-5, 9-13

(John 1:1-5 from the Voice)

Before time itself was measured, the Voice was speaking.

The Voice was and is God.

This celestial Voice remained ever present with the Creator;

His speech shaped the entire cosmos.

Immersed in the practice of creating, all things that exist were birthed in Him.

His breath filled all things with a living, breathing light,

Light that thrives in the depths of darkness, blazing through murky bottoms.

It cannot, and will not, be quenched.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it . . . The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

the meditation

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”**; **“What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”**; **“What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It's okay if you don't see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the Good Shepherd): JOHN 10:14

John 10:14 - I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me . . .

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

- * **How does, Christ being ‘The Good Shepherd’/ knowing God’s voice, find reality within the following story?**
- * **How does, Christ being ‘The Good Shepherd’/ knowing God’s voice, resonate with your experience with God?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 12:27-33

“ . . . Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, ‘I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.’ The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, ‘This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world, now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.’ He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.”

the meditation:

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection up the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”**; **“What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”**; **“What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It’s okay if you don’t see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the good shepherd): JOHN 10:11

John 10:11 - I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

- * How does, Christ being ‘The Good Shepherd, find reality within the following story?
- * How does, Christ being ‘The Good Shepherd, resonate with your experience with God?

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 19

1-3 So Pilate took Jesus and had him whipped. The soldiers, having braided a crown from thorns, set it on his head, threw a purple robe over him, and approached him with, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they greeted him with slaps in the face. **4-5** Pilate went back out again and said to them, “I present him to you, but I want you to know that I do not find him guilty of any crime.” Just then Jesus came out wearing the thorn crown and purple robe.

Pilate announced, “Here he is: the Man.” **6** When the high priests and police saw him, they shouted in a frenzy, “Crucify! Crucify!”

Pilate told them, “You take him. You crucify him. I find nothing wrong with him.” **7** The Jews answered, “We have a law, and by that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God.” **8-9** When Pilate heard this, he became even more scared. He went back into the palace and said to Jesus, “Where did you come from?” Jesus gave no answer. **10** Pilate said, “You won’t talk? Don’t you know that I have the authority to pardon you, and the authority to—crucify you?” **11** Jesus said, “You haven’t a shred of authority over me except what has been given you from heaven. That’s why the one who betrayed me to you has committed a far greater fault.” **12** At this, Pilate tried his best to pardon him, but the Jews shouted him down: “If you pardon this man, you’re no friend of Caesar’s. Anyone setting himself up as ‘king’ defies Caesar.” **13-14** When Pilate heard those words, he led Jesus outside. He sat down at the judgment seat in the area designated Stone Court (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). It was the preparation day for Passover. The hour was noon. Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is your king.” **15** They shouted back, “Kill him! Kill him! Crucify him!”

Pilate said, “I am to crucify your king?”

The high priests answered, “We have no king except Caesar.” **16-19** Pilate caved in to their demand. He turned him over to be crucified. They took Jesus away. Carrying his cross, Jesus went out to the place called Skull Hill (the name in Hebrew is Golgotha), where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on each side, Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote a sign and had it placed on the cross. It read: *jesus the nazarene the king of the jews*. **20-21** Many of the Jews read the sign because the place where Jesus was crucified was right next to the city. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The Jewish high priests objected. “Don’t write,” they said to Pilate, “‘The King of the Jews.’ Make it, ‘This man said, ‘I am the King of the Jews.’” **22** Pilate said, “What I’ve written, I’ve written.” **23-24** When they crucified him, the Roman soldiers took his clothes and divided them up four ways, to each soldier a fourth. But his robe was seamless, a single piece of weaving, so they said to each other, “Let’s not tear it up. Let’s throw dice to see who gets it.” This confirmed the Scripture that said, “They divided up my clothes among them and threw dice for my coat.” (The soldiers validated the Scriptures!) **24-27** While the soldiers were looking after themselves, Jesus’ mother, his aunt, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood at the foot of the cross. Jesus saw his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her. He said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that moment the disciple accepted her as his own mother. **28** Jesus, seeing that everything had been completed so that the Scripture record might also be complete, then said, “I’m thirsty.” **29-30** A jug of sour wine was standing by. Someone put a sponge soaked with the wine on a javelin and lifted it to his mouth. After he took the wine, Jesus said, “It’s done . . . complete.” Bowing his head, he offered up his spirit. **31-34** Then the Jews, since it was the day of Sabbath preparation, and so the bodies wouldn’t stay on the crosses over the Sabbath (it was a high holy day that year), petitioned Pilate that their legs be broken to speed death, and the bodies taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man crucified with Jesus, and then the other. When they got to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn’t break his legs. One of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with his spear. Blood and water gushed out. **35** The eyewitness to these things has presented an accurate report. He saw it himself and is telling the truth so that you, also, will believe. **36-37** These things that happened confirmed the Scripture, “Not a bone in his body was broken,” and the other Scripture that reads, “They will stare at the one they pierced.” **38** After all this, Joseph of Arimathea (he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, because he was intimidated by the Jews) petitioned Pilate to take the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission. So Joseph came and took the body. **39-42** Nicodemus, who had first come to Jesus at night, came now in broad daylight carrying a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. They took Jesus’ body and, following the Jewish burial custom, wrapped it in linen with the spices. There was a garden near the place he was crucified, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been placed. So, because it was Sabbath preparation for the Jews and the tomb was convenient, they placed Jesus in it.

the meditation:

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection upon the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”**; **“What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”**; **“What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?



the gospel of john “I am” statement (the vine): JOHN 15

John 15:1 - I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. *John 14:20 " In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."*

the humble prayer:

We pray on the very outset of our time of group Lectio Divina. As with personal Lectio Divina, we collectively acknowledge that we need to know God and we desire God to work in us. **“Jesus, show us yourself in these words . . .”**

directed questions:

These questions are to help direct our thoughts back to the “I am” statement. Let these questions help you as you meditate—but do not answer these at this current time.

- * **How does, Christ being ‘The VINE, find reality within the following story?**
- * **How does, Christ being ‘The VINE, resonate with your experience with God?**

the gospel of john reading: JOHN 19

(Jesus) Come and join Me for breakfast.

Not one of the disciples dared to ask, “Who are You?” They knew it was the Lord. Jesus took the bread and gave it to each of them, and then He did the same with the fish. This was the third time the disciples had seen Jesus since His death and resurrection. They finished eating breakfast.

(Jesus) Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these other things?

(Peter) Yes, Lord. You know that I love You.

(Jesus) Take care of My lambs.

Jesus asked him a second time . . .

(Jesus) Simon, son of John, do you love Me?

(Peter) Yes, Lord. You must surely know that I love You.

(Jesus) Shepherd My sheep. Simon, son of John, do you love Me?

Peter was hurt because He asked him the same question a third time, “Do you love Me?”

(Peter) Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You.

(Jesus) Look after My sheep. I tell you the truth, when you were younger you would pick up and go wherever you pleased; but when you grow old, someone else will help you and take you places you do not want to go. Jesus said all this as an indicator of the nature of Peter's death, which would glorify God. After the conversation Jesus said, FOLLOW ME!

the meditation:

* After the first reading, the leader asks, **“What word or phrase is standing out (or shimmering) to you?”** Everyone who wants to simply shares the word or phrase with no other comments about it.

* The passage is then read two or three more times (maybe by a different person). In silence, the participants meditate on the word or phrase that has stood out in the reading. After some moments of prayer the leader asks, **“What image, scene, or story comes to mind, regarding the word or phrase?”** The participants may even begin to IMAGINE themselves in the narrative. **“Are you finding yourself in the narrative? Where—from what vantage point?”**

* A third reading of the passage (again, maybe by another person), is followed by a more extended time of prayer and reflection upon the reading. Participants are asked to respond to the question, **“How does this reading, word, or phrase connect with my life?”; “What do I perceive God doing in me/us?”; “What might God be birthing or continuing in me/us as a result of this meditation?”**

journal and share

Now consider how you might write about your experience with these descriptions of Jesus. You are also encouraged to share the things you are finding with others (especially your house church). It's okay if you don't see clearly how God may be working—but, take some time and respond to these questions.

“What is God beginning or continuing to communicate to you / to the community?”

“How is God revealing more of Himself to you / to the community?”

“How is God asking you to respond to Him?”

Be ready to share portions of your journal within the house church this week.

FUSION HOUSE CHURCH RESOURCES JOURNAL

SPIRITUAL

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading has God given you?

INCARNATIONAL

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to or oppression of others? Have you been able to work for justice and shalom (God's peace)?

TRANSFORMATIONAL

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting?