**Building an intentional rhythm of prayer into Small Group Meetings**

**How can our opening prayers root our small group meetings within a rhythm of life?**

Most groups will over time develop their own patterns of prayer and worship. You may already have an established pattern. These prayers are intended to offer a simple framework as a resource for small group leaders. They recognise that for many people small groups are an important part of their rhythm of life keeping them grounded in Christ. Note that these are not intended to be prescriptive but are examples to try and to get you thinking about how as a group you can learn and model different rhythms and prayer practices.

**Some ideas (and you will have many more):**

As part of your opening worship why not consider sometimes including the following:

You may wish to start with a simple spiritual practice like the Prayer of Examen, centring or breath prayers as a way of letting go the stresses of the week and preparing your hearts to listen to God. If members of the group have particular spiritual practices that they find ground them in their faith why not invite them to introduce them to the group.

Don’t forget that family events, celebrations, loss, work, family can be marked and their importance in the Godly rhythms of our lives acknowledged.

Why not consider having short periods of silence at different points in your evening to allow people to reflect on what they are learning and refocus on what God is saying.

**Some possible prayers to use:**

Lord God, as we regularly gather in your name to read and reflect on your word, inspire us with your truth and deepen our friendship with you. May your Holy Spirit speak to us, and through us, as we learn more about your kingdom and encourage one another on the pathway of faith. Bind us together as one body. May we learn more about Jesus, that following his example, we may better serve others and be salt and light in our communities. Prepare our hearts and minds that we may each day make space within the rhythms of our lives to be with you.

In Jesus’ name, we pray, **Amen.**

As we meet together in the name of God the Holy Spirit may this prayer be always in our heart.

Lord speak, so that we may hear and learn to follow.

Jesus, unite us in love for one another.

Spirit, fill us as we live out our love for you every day.

Oh God we pray that you will fill each moment with your presence so that every rhythm of our life, together or apart, speaks of your glory. **Amen.**

Dear Lord,

Meet us in the rhythms of our lives:

in beginnings and endings,

in weeping and in laughter,

in working and resting,

in loving and leaving,

in conflict and in peace,

in planting and uprooting,

in times of faith and times of doubt.

In all things help us to be faithful to our calling:

to love and follow you,

to love and serve one another

and the world you created.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,

**Amen.**

(Inspired by Ecclesiastes 3.1-8)

**Closing Prayer**

You may have your own favourite prayers or could choose to end with a traditional prayer such as:

God be in my head, and in my understanding;

God be in my eyes, and in my looking;

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking;

God be in my heart, and in my thinking;

God be at my end, and at my departing. **Amen.**

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