

The Parables of Jesus

Parable of the Lamp

Our goal in Lifegroups is to grow closer in our relationships to Jesus and each other. We are working toward this goal by focusing on the stories Jesus told, and placing ourselves in the environment to hear them, discuss them and apply them. What is the Lord speaking to you today through His Word? Why did Jesus tell this story? What did he want to communicate to them and to you? Ask yourself, “Am I willing to listen, participate and be changed?”

Enjoy time visiting with each other, eating etc. After time simply connecting, and hanging out, please intentionally follow these steps created to promote and strengthen our relationship with Jesus.

Step 1- Welcome- Celebrate successes in the group; decisions for Christ, service projects, person investment time spent outside of group, breakthroughs, answers to prayer etc.

Step 2- Opening Prayer

Step 3- Lifegroup Purpose/ Vision Casting- We are meeting together because we love Jesus and each other and we are creating disciples who create disciples.

Step 4- Review the Lifegroup Guidelines (Next Page)

Step 5- Preparing Our Heart to Experience a Lifegroup- Ask everyone to stay personally engaged throughout the story. Ask them to focus on the story, how they relate to it and why. Encourage everyone to share from their hearts and to be transparent and authentic and that every person will share. **It helps for the leader to share first, setting the tone of transparency. If you don't dig deep, they won't either.**

Step 6- Setting the Scene for The Parable of the Lamp (Mark 4:21-25)

Jesus was teaching by the lakeshore to a very large crowd one day. He told them many stories starting with the Parable of a farmer scattering seed and the differences in the soil and ground that the Message of the Lord falls upon. We want to be good soil, that seed takes root in. He wants us to hear and accept His message and produce a large harvest up to 100 times more than what was planted. The next story appeals to our common sense and implies a purpose....

As you listen to the story, be thinking of the question you will be answering after the story...

Currently, in this season of your life.....

What specifically is happening that fits into this parable? What behaviors have you recently exhibited that determine where your light is positioned?

Step 7- Telling the Story from Memory- Either yourself or someone else in the group tells the story from memory. You can ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to do this. **(Mark 4:21-25)** After they finish telling the story, ask the group if anything was added or omitted. Was everything in order?

Step 8- Rebuild the Story- Read the story from the Word as a group (**Mark 4:21-25**). Were you correct, in your earlier discussion about what was added, omitted and the proper order of the story?

- **Step 9- Debrief the Story-** Everyone participates from the heart and answers the question; Currently, in this season of your life,
- **What has occurred that shows the position of your light? The act of lighting implies the purpose of illumination. Is your light shining before the world?**
- **Provide insight into specifically what you can do in your everyday life to position your light more effectively or increase your “wattage”.**
- **How do you feel about everything in your life that is hidden, every secret, being brought into the light? Will it change anything about the way you live tomorrow? Why or why not?**

There is a difference between hearing, listening, and doing. We are cautioned in these verses to be careful how we hear. We are to listen closely to receive more understanding. Setting the lamp on a stand rather than under the bed, hidden, shows action or the process of doing. What are the difference in these words? Hearing is simply the act or ability to capture and utilize soundwaves. Listening shows that you are giving careful attention and waiting attentively to receive. Doing represents action, performance and execution. We need to listen to the message with attentiveness and anticipation of putting it into action, receiving more understanding as we do. If we are coming to church and only hearing the message, we will have a lamp without illumination and we will lose the little understanding that we have been given.

Step 10- Close in Prayer

LIFEGROUPS GUIDELINES- Please use these guidelines while you meet to ensure a safe growing environment. The leader ensures throughout the group meeting that these guidelines are met. If you have a member that needs more personalized attention, set up an appointment outside of group time.

- **Safe Environment-** This needs to be a place where people feel comfortable opening and sharing with one another. Below are some Lifegroup guidelines that will help to create a safe environment.
- **Confidentiality-** What is said at group, stays at group.
- **Listen-** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you will respond or what you are going to say next.
- **Pause-** Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing a chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.
- **Silence-** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and members of the group to process the topic or question being considered.
- **No “Cross Talk”-** Be considerate of others as they are sharing- no side conversations.
- **No Fixing-** We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement, speak truth, point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.
- **No Rescuing-** When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people. **Point people to Jesus.**
- **Sharing-** Be sensitive about the amount of time that you share, both under sharing and oversharing.
- **Be Self Aware-** Be self-aware of how you are personally affecting the environment through your words, actions and nonverbal communication.
- **“I” Statements-** It is easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them”, “the church”, “us”, “we”, etc.
- **Conflict-** We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key scriptures in this regard (there are many others).