

# APPRENTICESHIP GROUPS

*Practicing the Way of Jesus Together*



## **A Sample Apprenticeship Group Schedule**

Catch up: *5 Minutes*

Confession: *20 Minutes\**

Discuss Scripture: *20 Minutes*

Prayer: *15 Minutes*

*\*for the first few meetings confession may take longer as you get caught up on each others stories, and figure out what questions would be most pertinent. So make sure to give extra time for this.*

*Apprenticeship Groups are based upon the foundation of Life Transformation Groups created by Neil Cole.*

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At Stony Plain Alliance Church we are about practicing the way of Jesus together, this is a life of apprenticing with Jesus - being with him, being like him, and doing what he does. This is what we believe is the path to what Jesus called fullness of life, or what is often called the good life. Anyone who has tried to live this life knows it takes hard work and intentionality, and so we have crafted apprenticeship groups to help you on the way.

This booklet describes what an apprenticeship group is, what they do, and how you can run one.

Apprenticeship groups are based around intentionally building relationships around being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus does. We recommend that you meet in groups of 2-3 regularly, weekly or bi-weekly, to keep accounts short. A large benefit of apprenticeship groups is that they are smaller and a result are extremely flexible. The only schedules that need to be pulled together are those in the group, and if distance is an issue, it's easy enough meet together over a digital tool like Zoom or Facetime.

An apprenticeship group meeting should take about an hour. During this hour there are four main movements to an apprenticeship group meeting; confession, scripture, practices, and prayer.

Due to the vulnerable nature of the groups it is necessary to uphold confidentiality. These groups need to be safe places where everyone can share free from judgement. For this reason it is best to meet with those of the same gender.

Our hope is that these Apprenticeship Groups will be a vehicle for you to grow in in your walk with Jesus, and to grow in community with others. May you be blessed by Jesus to be with him, become like him, and do what he does.

For more information about apprenticeship groups and for help getting started contact Pastor Matt for more details at [matt@spaonline.com](mailto:matt@spaonline.com)

# MOVEMENT ONE

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## *Confession*



*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith." Hebrews 12:1-2*

The author of Hebrews provides this vivid image of following Jesus being like a long distance race. On this race we end up with things that hinder us and then there's sin these things that seek to wrap themselves around us to trip us up so that we can't run as well. Any longer distance runner knows that when running you want to be as free from unnecessary weight and bulky clothes, you want to be as free as possible to run. Life is the same as well, we want to be as free as possible to run easily and unhindered. So the question comes how do we do this?

Jesus' brother James writes, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" James 5:16a). Confession is an essential practice of an apprentice of Jesus, both confessing our sin and brokenness to God as well to others. Confession when done well is a regular practice of removing the extra weight so that we can run the race better. We confess our sins to Christ our saviour and race leader, and we also need to confess to our fellow runners. Part of sin's power is when it is unconfessed - leading to fear and shame wondering what will happen if you're found out. Confession can put shame to bay as we discover in Christ one who willing forgives us, and as we confess to another person it disarms shame as we realize we are forgiven. One of the most powerful things we can do as fellow believers is to affirm God's forgiveness and pray blessing over one another. As you confess your sin and brokenness to one another give space for affirming God's forgiveness and praying blessing over one another. For an example of this see the appendix.

An often over looked aspect of confession is the positive sense of confessing Christlikeness. Sharing about how we have looked like Christ may sound like bragging or being prideful, leading us to shy away from it for the sake of humility. Instead we want to think about it in terms of testifying to growing as apprentices of Jesus.

# MOVEMENT TWO

## Scripture





*"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."  
2 Timothy 3:16*

Any apprentice of Jesus knows how important regular engagement of the Scripture is. We believe that the Scriptures were inspired by the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit worked with the human authors to write what they did. As we engage the Scriptures we discover an account of God's interaction with humanity, learning more about who God is and how he has moved in the world. We encounter Jesus, seeing his life and teaching displayed, showing us the way to live by. A beautiful reality of reading Scriptures is that the same God who breathed them into existence will breathe into our reading of it as well revealing how to walk in the Jesus way today.

While its easy to know that engaging the Scriptures is important, this doesn't mean its easy or natural for all of us. This is where Apprentice Groups can be really helpful. A non-negotiable of the groups is that you are read the same section of Scripture in between meetings. This amount should be challenging but also attainable, meaning don't pick an amount of chapters that is so easy that you can quickly sluff it off, or too difficult that you find you are rushing through or demotivated by it. The goal is not checking off something on a to do list but instead encountering Jesus. When you meet if everyone in the group did not finish the reading you need to do it again, but if all have then you continue on. Having others doing this with you can help motivation to engage in regular reading of Scripture.

So how much should you read? That's up to your group. Some will choose to read large chunks one time, others will read a couple chapters many times. For some reading 30 chapters in a week is easy, and for others 15 in a week is daunting. So find what works for your group. Where do you start? The gospels are always a good place to begin, look at the life of Jesus and allow him to be the lens by which you read the rest of the Bible.

## MOVEMENT THREE

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*Spiritual Practices*





*"Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."*

1 Timothy 4:7-8

Spiritual practices are things that we intentionally do in order to put ourselves in the path of God, to attune ourselves to his presence with us, and abide in Him. . As we participate in these practices the Holy Spirit empowers them towards our transformation - towards us being shaped to be like Jesus. While Apprenticeship Groups are focused on three main practices - confession, scripture reading, and intercessory prayer - there are many other practices that are beneficial to life in the Jesus way.

Apprenticeship Groups will be a space of experimentation where we will be periodically highlighting different practices, learning about them and trying them out for a month. As you practice them in community with others you can share how it worked best for you and challenge one another to grow.

The goal is not to build up a repertoire of practices that you are regularly engaging in, but instead to find the ones that will be the most helpful for you to be with Jesus in your day to day life. The goal is not to have a heavy weight of things to engage in, instead it's to find out how you can best step into the unforced rhythms of life that Jesus talks about.

All of these practices will be oriented around living into the life in the way of Jesus, helping us be with him, become like him, and do what he does. Some of the practices we will be engaging in will be praying Scripture, silence and solitude, fasting, sabbath, and lectio divina. We hope that these apprenticeship groups give you space to better figure how you connect with Jesus.

*For the first few months as a group begin with getting into the rhythms of the other movements. After there is a sense familiarity with confession, scripture, and prayer then begin experimenting with the other practices.*

## MOVEMENT FOUR

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*Prayer*



*"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

Matthew 28:18-20

The fourth movement of apprenticeship groups is praying for others to come to Jesus. A large aspect of the life of a Christ follower is being people who bring good news, and sharing this good news of Jesus to those around us. This work is primarily Christ's, as he is calling all people to himself (John 12:32), but he is inviting us to join him in this work.

Jesus told a parable about a farmer who casts seeds around his farm and they land all sorts of soils. These different seeds produce different results, but ultimately their growth is the result of God at work and not the farmers hard labour. Jesus told this story to relate what it means to be people of good news. As apprentices of Jesus we have the good news to share that Jesus is king over everything, that he has defeated death, and is welcoming all into his fullness of life.

In Apprenticeship groups we want to intentionally identify people in our everyday lives that don't know Jesus. As a part of apprenticeship groups we want to pray for these people, asking Jesus to be reaching them and that we would be sharing as the opportunity presents itself.

Also take time to hear from each other and pray for one another's needs, If your struggling for how to pray for another try praying biblical prayers for each other, personalizing the passages. Some of these passages are Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-12, Hebrews 13:20-21, Ephesians 1:17-19, Philemon 6, 3 John 2, Ephesians 3:16-19, 1 Thessalonians 3:10-13, Romans 15:13, and Numbers 6:24-26. Of course this list is not exhaustive, but instead a good place to begin.

## APPENDIX

### *Sample Confession Questions & Prayer*



## Sample Confession Questions

- How have you looked/acted like Jesus this week?
- Have you lacked integrity in your financial dealings? Have you been satisfied with what God has given you this week? How have you wanted more
- Have you been honouring, understanding, and generous in your important relationships this week?
- Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind their back or face to face?
- Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate sexual thoughts about someone this week?
- How have you obeyed the promptings of the Holy Spirit this week?
- What has distracted you from God and your important relationships this week?
- Have you secretly wished for someones misfortune?
- Have you taken time to be still in God's presence this week?
- Is there anything else you need to confess?
- Have you been completely honest with me?
- Did you finish the reading and hear from God? What are you going to do about it?

For other questions visit [www.spaonline.com/practicing-the-way](http://www.spaonline.com/practicing-the-way)

"(name) based on your confession, we know that since God is faithful and just he will forgive and purify you from your sins (1 John 1:9). So you are forgiven, and your sin is separated from you; receive the release and purification of forgiveness."

Then take a few moments to ask Jesus if there are any ways that he wants to bless that person. If so then pray those over the person.



## Questions To Ask When Discussing Scripture

We don't want apprenticeship groups to be just focused on reading the text, but we want to allow it to effect our lives. So take time to discuss what you have read, and how it can be applied to your life. Here are some sample questions that you can ask as you discuss your reading.

What stuck out to you as you read?

What images were repeated often?

What challenged you or made you feel uneasy?

How can I be with Jesus based on what I've read?

What is Jesus/God like in the passage, how am I being invited to be like him?

What does Jesus/God do in the passage, how am I being invited to do what he does?

What has to change in my life based on what I've read?

## Where To Start Reading

A great place to begin reading is to start in the gospels, pick a gospel that you would be least familiar with and go from there. After sitting with the gospels move to other parts of the Scripture, but try to not stray too far from them. The letters of New Testament are another place to go and can easily be read twice between meetings.

Here is an example of a bi-weekly reading pattern that you could follow.

Meeting 1: John 1-7 x2

Meeting 2: John 8-15 x2

Meeting 3: John 16-21 x2

Meeting 4: Mark 1-8 x2

Meeting 5: Mark 9-16 x2

Meeting 6: Matthew 1-7 x2

Meeting 7: Matthew 8-15 x2

Meeting 8: Matthew 16-22 x2

Meeting 9: Matthew 23-28 x2

Meeting 10: Luke 1-6 x2

Meeting 11: Luke 7-12 x2

Meeting 12: Luke 13-19 x2

Meeting 13: Luke 20-24 x2

Meeting 14: Ephesians x2

Meeting 15: Colossians x3

Meeting 16: Hebrews 1-7 x2

Meeting 17: Hebrews 8-13 x2

Meeting 18: Ecclesiastes 1-6 x2

Meeting 19: Ecclesiastes 7-12 x2

Meeting 20: John 1-7x2

## Prayer For Others

Each of you in the group is to identify one or two people that you are intentionally praying for to come know Jesus. List the names of all those identified in the group so that you are praying for them all weekly. A good practice would be to use this as a bookmark for your bible reading so that each time you open your bible you are prompted to pray for them

- Lord, I pray that you will draw \_\_\_\_\_ to yourself (John 6:44)
- I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will hear and believe the Word of God for what it really is (1 Thess 2:13)
- I pray that you will prevent Satan from blinding \_\_\_\_\_ to the truth (2 Cor 4:4; 2 Tim 2:25-26)
- Holy Spirit, I ask you to convict \_\_\_\_\_ of their sin and need for Christ's redemption (John 16:7-14)
- I also ask that you will give me or someone else the opportunity, the courage, and the right words to share the good news of the kingdom with \_\_\_\_\_. (Matt 9:37-38)
- Lord I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will turn from their sin and follow Christ (Acts 17:30-31)
- Lord I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ would put all of their trust in Christ (John 1:12, 5:24)
- Lord I pray that \_\_\_\_\_ will confess Christ as lord, take root and grow in faith and bear fruit for your glory (Romans 10:9, Col 2:6-7, Luke 8:15)
- The Lord bless you and keep \_\_\_\_\_; the Lord make his face shine on \_\_\_\_\_ and be gracious to \_\_\_\_\_; the Lord turn his face toward \_\_\_\_\_ and give \_\_\_\_\_ peace (Numbers 6:24-26)



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**FULLNESS OF LIFE FOR EVERYONE,**  
BY PRACTICING THE WAY OF JESUS TOGETHER