

LIFE Group Leader Handout

October 18, 2015

Chosen

Pastor Mike O'Connor

Scripture—Luke 6:12-16

In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. [13] And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: [14] Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, [15] and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, [16] and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Main Idea—Our Extraordinary God Uses Ordinary People to Accomplish World Changing tasks

The Inexplicable Choice

Those whom God chose as apostles had no religious training or background, no dignified pedigree. In fact they are called "aggramatoi . . . idiotai" (unlearned idiots)—but they turned the world upside down.

The Unrivaled Preparation

- They lacked spiritual understanding—so Jesus taught them.
- They lacked humility—Jesus was an example of it to them
- Their faith was small—Jesus put them in situations where they needed to call on Him and as they did and He answered, their faith was strengthened.
- Their commitment was lacking—He payed for them.
- Their power was insufficient—He gave them His Holy Spirit to indwell them
- They are tempted to look at themselves and their past—Jesus speaks a blessed future over them.

The Unexpected Outcome

They turned the world upside down.

Postscript: A Lesson on Prayer

Jesus prayed all night—how could He choose Judas? Prayer does not assure that nothing bad will ever happen. It was the will of God and a fulfillment of Scripture that Judas be one of the Twelve. We should always pray. And those times when the answers do not seem in accord with what we would expect and desire, believe a sovereign God who love us is working His will in the midst.

Application—

- What, if anything, was memorable from this message for you?
- Is this changing how you are looking at those you love and lead? How you look at yourself? How you are looking at the circumstances God is allowing in your life?
- Are there any specific teaching/training areas that seem significant and relevant right now? (Lack of spiritual discernment, lack of humility, faith, power, etc.)

CLOSING THE GROUP MEETING IN PRAYER

by Mark Howell

Q: "What's the best way to close a group meeting in prayer?"

A: Great question! There are several parts to my answer. First, the entire meeting structure ought to vary according to the group's members. After all, new groups will be much less willing to share genuine needs. Long-term groups may spend a much longer portion of their group time praying.

Second, if the intensity of a meeting ought to change over time, it makes sense that the way your group prays together ought to change over time. The closing prayer at the very first meeting might be more of a blessing than anything else. As the group begins to get to know each other, you may find that what used to take 5 minutes now takes 30. You may also find that, without some intentionality, the authenticity of your member's prayer requests are stuck at a fairly superficial level. This is the point when it will benefit everyone to take advantage of the idea of a spiritual partner.

Third, if the only person who can close is the official leader, you're missing a great opportunity. As early as possible, you'll want to begin to help your members learn how to pray together. If the greatest fear that people have is public speaking, it only makes sense that many people will be hesitant to pray out loud. Here are some ideas that I've found very helpful:

Distribute index cards and pens and ask each person to write out a simple one sentence prayer request. Swap cards and read them aloud.

Ask each person to fill in the blank and say one thing they're thankful for: "God, I'm thankful for my _____,"

Pull a chair in the middle of the room and suggest that since Jesus said, "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them (Matthew 18:20)," in tonight's meeting let's speak to him as if he was right there in that chair."

Sentence prayers with no conjunctions (and). One idea at a time. For example, "God help me with _____." "God I'm thankful for _____." "God be with Dean tonight in a way he can sense."

Try a ground rule: You can only pray for a personal concern tonight. Nothing for your sister's husband's co-worker's daughter.

Ask your members to pair up or get in groups of three to pray together.