

House Meeting Prayer Devotional





We welcome you to what we pray will be a journey of dialogue and discovery for you and the members of your congregation who will be participating along with you in these four house meetings. We refer to these house meetings as safe places for “informed discernment conversations.” We firmly believe there is a deep spiritual component to this experience. Therefore, we are providing you with this small devotional to accompany you in this journey.

We invite you to read and pray your way through each Scripture passage prior to your meetings. You will be invited, if you so desire, to share your thoughts and insights from your devotional time as part of the house meetings.

May this experience result in a wonderful time of discovery into which God is calling your congregation—as you seek to be transformed to impact your community in new and life-changing ways.



SESSION 1

Philippians 1:3-11

3-6 Everytime you cross my mind, I break out in exclamations of thanks to God. Each exclamation is a trigger to prayer. I find myself praying for you with a glad heart. I am so pleased that you have continued on in this with us, believing and proclaiming God's Message, from the day you heard it right up to the present. There has never been the slightest doubt in my mind that the God who started this great work in you would keep at it and bring it to a flourishing finish on the very day Christ Jesus appears.

7-8 It's not at all fanciful for me to think this way about you. My prayers and hopes have deep roots in reality. You have, after all, stuck with me all the way from the time I was thrown in jail, put on trial, and came out of it in one piece. All along you have experienced with me the most generous help from God. God knows how much I love and miss you these days. Sometimes I think I feel as strongly about you as Christ does!

9-11 So this is my prayer: that your love will flourish and that you will not only love much but well. Learn to love appropriately. You need to use your head and test your feelings so that your love is sincere and intelligent, not sentimental gush. Live a lover's life, circumspect and exemplary, a life Jesus will be proud of: bountiful in fruits from the soul, making Jesus Christ attractive to all, getting everyone involved in the glory and praise of God.

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Philippians 1:3-11

Read the passage several times and see what words or phrases stand out to you.

To Consider:

In his writing to the church in Philippi, what does Paul tell them brings joy to his heart?

What can we learn from the passage about sharing the Gospel?

Moment of Prayer:

Pray that your congregation may find joy in sharing the Gospel in new and transforming ways. Pray that the house meetings might provide a place for transformative conversations and bold decision-making.

Thoughts:

Session 2

Micah 6:6-8

⁶⁻⁷ How can I stand up before GOD
and show proper respect to the high God?
Should I bring an armload of offerings topped off with yearling
calves?
Would GOD be impressed with thousands of rams, with
buckets and barrels of olive oil?
Would [God] be moved if I sacrificed my firstborn child,
my precious baby, to cancel my sin?

⁸ But [God's] already made it plain how to live, what to do, what
GOD is looking for in men and women.
It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be
compassionate and loyal in your love,
And don't take yourself too seriously— take GOD seriously.

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Micah 6:6-8

Read the passage several times and see what words or phrases stand out to you

To Consider:

What does God ask of use in how we live in community with others?

What could that look like in our context today?

Moment of Prayer?

Pray for the community you have been called to serve. Pray that your congregation may be empowered to make a difference in the lives of the people in the community.

Thoughts:

SESSION 3

Matthew 28:18-20

18-20 Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge:
“God authorized and commanded me to commission you:
Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this
way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold
name: Maker, Christ, and Holy
Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have
commanded you.
I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day,
right up to the end of the age.”

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Matthew 28:18-20

Read the passage several times and see what words or phrases stand out to you.

To Consider:

How is your congregation living out the Great Commission?

What might be new and transformative ways the congregation could employ to be more effective in reaching the community?

Moment of Prayer:

Pray that creativity might flow through your group as you dream God's big dreams for your congregation. Pray that they will not be held back by fears or doubts but rather trust God in what is emerging from this process.

Thoughts:

SESSION 4

Habakkuk 2:2-3

2-3 And then GOD answered: “Write this.

Write what you see.

Write it out in big block letters

so that it can be read on the run.

This vision-message is a witness pointing to what’s coming.

It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn’t lie.

If it seems slow in coming, wait.

It’s on its way. It will come right on time.

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Habakkuk 2:2-3

Read the passage several times and see what words or phrases stand out to you.

To Consider:

How is the vision described in the passage?

Who is called to share (make a reality) in the vision?

Moment of Prayer:

Pray that the Future Story that emerges from this process will be a bold vision of the difference the congregation can make in the life of the community. Pray that the vision will result in the empowering of the congregation so all can “take the vision and run with it.”

Thoughts:

Covenant of Presence

We acknowledge that discussions about congregational transformation may be stressful. We would like this to be a “safe space” where we honor each other’s intentions and can have transparent conversation about hard issues even when we disagree with each other.

We want to covenant together to:

- Be fully present, setting aside distractions during this time.
- Respect each other as equals even if and as we disagree.
- Listen generously to one another’s perspectives as well as share our own.
- Listen to one another with respect and without judging one another.
- Agree to no “fixing.” Discernment, not debate, is our primary objective.
- Allow a person to complete their thought without interrupting.
- Make “space” for everyone that wishes to ask questions or make comments.
- Be mindful and respectful of time, including start time, end time, and sharing time.
- Practice confidentiality care – “What you hear here, what you see here, let it stay here.”
- Believe that this time can provide renewal, refreshment and possibilities; that seeds planted here will bloom in time to come.

Helpful Tip: If you find yourself becoming judgmental, cynical or certain about what you know, try turning to wonder: “I wonder why she shared that story or made those choices?” “I wonder what my reaction teaches me?” “I wonder how my story connects to their stories?”

Part of this covenant is adapted by the Forum for Theological Exploration (FTE) from the Center for Courage and Renewal’s Circles of Trust retreats and Margaret Wheatley’s Turning to One Another.

Signature _____ Date _____



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