



Huddles

Women in the Bible, Week #4

Learning to love and follow Jesus—together—by His strength, in every day life.

What are huddles at Foundations?

- Groups of 3-8 people (or 3-4 couples) that meet for one hour per week at a time and location of your choosing. Larger groups should plan for 75 minutes.
- Huddles last for 8 weeks. At the end of each 8-week session, you can keep your group, add to your group or even change groups & topics.
- While gathering on Sunday is vital to spiritual growth, so is connecting with others to encourage one another, discussing what it means to follow Jesus and praying for one another. These practices are detailed in our RHYTHMS course (which is not necessary to take part in huddles, but highly recommended).

Our Mission is to bring the extraordinary life-changing message of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

- Huddles are one way we prepare to do this very thing, and we can't do that unless our lives are being transformed by Him.
- Hence, the goal of every session is that you will grow more like Jesus in some small way.
- In order to do this, we will focus on God's Word, encourage one another and commit to praying for one another.
- Each week, there are individual rhythms we encourage that will help you "love and follow Jesus."
- Similarly, there are corporate rhythms that help us in our spiritual formation.
- Consistent practice of these rhythms is part of the holistic development of disciples, and this booklet is designed to touch on that development.
- This holistic framework will give structure to your meeting time.

The individual rhythms overview (for those that haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Prayer: Talking to God and listening to Him via His Word, His Spirit-Filled people and His creation.
If you don't know how to pray, a good start is the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 5.

Abide in the Word: Reading the Bible, prayerfully, asking God to show you what He wants for you. A good practice is to read with a pen & journal to write your thoughts as He leads them.

Silence: choosing to avoid speaking in order to listen to what He might want to say to us. Another Solitude: avoidance of interaction with others in order to be alone with Him. Silence enhances this.

Reflection (especially effective at the end of the day, maybe before sleep): Take some time in stillness to experience His presence, tell God things you're thankful for, make note of where you experienced Him today--or where you didn't—and note instances of loving your “neighbor” well—or failure to do so. Ask God for what He may want for you in the day tomorrow.

Other rhythms that will likely be practiced less frequently: Fasting (food; if there's an area you are seeking specific guidance); giving joyfully (financially as an act of worship) and rest (setting aside time to enjoy your life and choosing to refrain from work)

The corporate rhythms overview (for those that haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Worship gathering: A time for our family to be together to participate corporately in the rhythms of worship together.

Participation in community: A time to engage in huddle, as well as other forms of being together as a church family (such as concerts, conferences/classes, events, etc.)

Lord's Supper: A chance for our family to reflect on the person and work of Jesus and look forward in hope to His coming again in a symbol of eternal unity.

Baptism: A one-time action of a declaration of faith in Christ. It is our hope that everyone be baptized, as well as choosing to enjoy the celebration of others who choose to do so.

Using your gift to serve the Body: We have been given a gift to help the body of Christ come to maturity in faith, and we benefit by your presence.

Having a ministry of love for neighbor: We choose to exemplify the abundant life in order to fulfill our mission of bringing the extraordinary life of Jesus Christ to a lost and broken world.

Prayer, Day 1

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down what you talked with God about and/or how He answered in a journal.

- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray aloud the following prayer from St. Francis of Assisi:

You are holy, Lord, the only God,
and Your deeds are wonderful.
You are strong.
You are great.
You are the Most High.
You are Almighty.
You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.
You are Three and One, Lord God, all Good.
You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,
Lord God, living and true.
You are love. You are wisdom.
You are humility. You are endurance.
You are rest. You are peace.
You are joy and gladness.
You are justice and moderation.
You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.
You are beauty.
You are gentleness.
You are our protector.
You are our guardian and defender.
You are our courage. You are our haven and our hope.
You are our faith, our great consolation.
You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful Lord,
God Almighty, Merciful Saviour.

Time in the Word, Day 1, Luke 1: 26-38

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
- When Luke wrote this, there seemed to be a lot of public interest about Jesus. He was writing somewhere between 80-100 AD, which allows for him to draw from some other written sources. Nonetheless, it was his goal to put out an orderly account of Jesus words and works.
- Previous to this section, Elizabeth, a relative of Mary (the mother of Jesus, there are several women with the name in the Bible, but here, we're talking about her) who was previously unable to have children, was miraculously pregnant with John the Baptist. She and her husband Zachariah were overjoyed to find out that their child would be a prophet in the spirit of Elijah. He was to announce the coming Messiah, so obviously the parents would be humbled and joyful to know they would be a part of God's plan to redeem the world.
- Mary, very likely a young teenager who was engaged to be married soon, got a visit from an angel.
- The last time the Bible records a prophet speaking or God communicating to His people audibly was 400 years previous. This lets us see that Mary was likely from a strong lineage spiritually speaking.

• Questions for Reflection:

- Was there a time when you felt like God had been silent for a long period of time in your life? If so, what were some of your thoughts and feelings about that silence?
- What do you think of Mary's reaction to the news? She didn't doubt it would happen, she just didn't understand *how* it would happen. What does this tell you about her faith?
- Imagine what her fiancé would think when he heard Mary's version of these events. What do you think that conversation was like?

Prayer, Day 2

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down what you talked with God about and/or how He answered in a journal.

- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the Lord's Prayer as an outline for your own words to express...

Tell God how thankful you are for the privilege of calling the King of Kings “our Father,” & that He listens and hears.

God is worthy of honor and worship

We should acknowledge that things on earth are not what they are supposed to be, and that we should ask God to be aware of His presence and strive to see what He wants this world to be. We should let others see His Kingdom by how we live.

We should be thankful that He provides our basic needs.

We should pray for forgiveness and forgive others

We should name our weaknesses and our temptations, and for the Spirit to strengthen us. We should close with praise.

Time in the Word, Day 2, Luke 1: 39-56

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
 - The angel informed Mary of Elizabeth's pregnancy, and as news would travel quickly in their village/town, it was probably advantageous for her to get to another town for the sake of her privacy (imagine how this story would be heard by locals).
 - The distance from Mary's town to Elizabeth's was roughly 60 miles, or a 3 to 4 day journey depending on mode of travel.
 - Familial bonds were much closer than they often are in today's culture, so it would be perfectly normal for Mary to celebrate with her family over her good news.
- Questions for Reflection:
 - What do you make of Elizabeth's reaction to Mary's arrival? What do you note about her baby's response to hearing Mary's voice?
 - This "song" of praise Mary sings is known as The Magnificat, or The Song of Mary.
 - How does Mary describe God? How did she feel about being chosen by God? What do you notice about her understanding of God even as she is a teen?

Prayer, Day 3

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down what you talked with God about and/or how He answered in a journal.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the ACTS method as an outline for your own words to express...
- Adoration (a time of worship): don't be afraid of "artistic expressions" here, or to use Psalms or hymns or other forms of praise.
- Confession: We all fall short and miss the mark. Confession of sin helps us our relationship to God.
- Thanksgiving: Simply tell God what you're thankful for.
- Supplication: Asking God for needs of the world, our country & leaders, our church, and anything and everything else. God wants to hear from you.

Time in the Word, Day 3, Luke 2: 1-21

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
- John the Baptist has been born, and Zechariah has his own song of praise to sing at the end of chapter 1.
- Much of this story we are familiar with. Mary & Joseph (who decided not to end the relationship despite the surmised hardships he likely endured given the nature of the story) went to Bethlehem for the census. Mary gave birth in a stable as there wasn't a place for them inside the inn.
- Questions for Reflection:
- Again, 400 years of prophetic silence from God was in process and now these shepherds (who, by the way, were ceremonially unclean) see a host of angels. What do you make of the content of that song? How have you felt when a long awaited prayer was answered by God?
- The distance from this hillside to the town was roughly 3 miles. Can you imagine how quickly teenagers covered that ground? Or how a group of young people tells a teen mom what they saw?
- Think of what Mary has been through in the last 9 months. What do you think she "pondered in her heart" given the news the shepherds gave her about the angels?

Prayer, Day 4

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down what you talked with God about and/or how He answered in a journal.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using the breath method to pray:
 - Simply take a Psalm and breathe in as you read the first line, and then exhale on the second.
 - Take deep, long, slow breaths.

You can also do this with just one verse of Scripture, and almost every Psalm can be done this way. Try to focus on the ones that focus on God and/or resonate with where you are at the moment.

Time in the Word, Day 4, John 2: 1-11

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
 - This is in the early stages of Jesus' public ministry. Not all the disciples had been called at this point.
 - Cana is about 8 miles away from Nazareth, Jesus' hometown.
 - Weddings in that culture lasted almost a week. The bride was likely a close family member, hence Mary's involvement in the party. To run out of wine would be extremely embarrassing for the new couple & their families.
 - It would not have been abnormal for a mother to ask for her son's help in solving a problem. Keep in mind that Mary knew SO much about God's plan for her son. She might not have known what he would do to solve the problem, but she believed He could solve the problem.
- Questions for Reflection:
 - Do you think Jesus' response was rude? Why or why not?
 - What do you think about the “behind-the-scenes” nature of the first miracle? Who would've been aware that a miracle even took place?
 - These water pots for ceremonial cleansing held about 20-30 gallons. They were to last the full week of the wedding. Note that Jesus turned what could've been a socially embarrassing situation into a time of exceptional joy. Can you think of a time in your life when Jesus surprised you with a provision of true abundance? How can that encourage you today?

Prayer, Day 5

- If you are comfortable praying as a conversation with God, find some focused time to do so.
- Find a place where you can have silence and solitude and talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down what you talked with God about and/or how He answered in a journal.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to simply pray using a Psalm...they are really great prayers! Find one that you resonate with, and pray it aloud:
- Simply take a Psalm, and this week you might want to go with Psalm 55
- Pray aloud, even if in a whisper, slowly and with concentration on the words.
- Try to be attentive to the thoughts that come to mind and discern if those may be something God is trying to tell you.

Time in the Word, Day 5, Mark 3: 31-35

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
 - In this section, Jesus has begun his public ministry, likely at the age of 30.
 - Jesus healed a man's withered hand, fed a large number of people with food left over as a teaching moment for his disciples.
 - His disciples were experiencing periods of large crowds following Jesus and the associated willingness of those crowds to make Him king. The 12 (listed in the verses previous to today's section) saw Jesus both draw and alienate crowds. Today's reading is one that could've been oft-putting to the masses.
- Questions for Reflection:
 - Why do you think Jesus answered the way that he did? What might've his family think if they heard his response?
 - Loyalty to family was one of the highest callings in that culture. What do you think the crowd might've felt hearing the response?

Prayer, Day 6: A Time for Reflection

Traditional time of Examen	A Few Thoughts on This Method
<p>This is a version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced.</p> <p>1. Become aware of God's presence.</p> <p>2. Review the day with gratitude.</p> <p>3. Pay attention to your emotions.</p> <p>4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.</p> <p>5. Look toward tomorrow.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Breathe & slow down. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and to bring to mind moments of your day to focus on.2. Walk through your day and give thanks for areas where you saw God "show up" and for His blessings.3. The things you feel when you review often highlight areas where God wants you to focus and what he wants to teach you. Often this results in confession when you see your emotions out of line with walking in the Spirit.4. Ask God to show you moments where you loved others well (or, conversely, He may bring to mind an area you didn't). Give thanks or ask forgiveness as warranted.5. Think through your day tomorrow and ask God what He may be calling you to do or be in the upcoming day.

Time in the Word, Day 6, John 19: 23-27

- Background & Insights on the Reading:
 - John described the trial of Jesus in great detail. The entire book of John transpires through the first 12 chapters to cover His life. The next 7 chapters cover a little more than a week.
 - If you aren't familiar with the trial of Jesus, you may want to read chapters 18 through 19:22 for details. Jesus was sentenced to death on a cross for His "crimes."
 - In the section we're reading today, Jesus is on the cross.
- Questions for Reflection:
 - Remember that Mary had so many memories of Jesus from even before He was born. What do you think she was experiencing watching all this transpire?
 - Why do you think Jesus connected John & his mother this way?
 - What does it say to you that Jesus provided for those he loved most during this time in His life?

Huddle Meeting: (suggested time = 30 mins)

General Check-In *(10 minutes)*

Describe your sleep habits this week.

Describe your dietary habits this week.

Describe your exercise habits this week.

Describe your development in intellectual curiosity this week (keeping up with current events, artistic endeavors, learning new skills, hobbies, etc)

Emotional Check-In *(10 minutes)*

Using the *SACHET wheel*, describe how you're doing emotionally right now. You may want to write down some of these to pray for your huddle during the week.



Rhythms Check-In *(10 minutes)*

Describe your experience with the individual rhythms this week.

Describe your experience with the corporate rhythms this week.

How can the huddle encourage you this week in these areas? Or...

...How can you encourage the huddle this week in these areas?

Huddle Meeting: Discussion for Growth

10 Minutes:

What is something you feel God truly taught you this week?

20 Minutes (based on readings from Matthew, Mark, Luke & John)

Compare and contrast your faith level with that of Mary's during the teen years.

What are some things you can do in your life to "love and follow Jesus" to the degree you'd know Him as well as Mary did in The Magnificat?

Regardless of your faith level, if you were to make any changes in your life based on what we read this week, what would that look like?