

Huddle Overview - John Study Week 5

Discipleship Definition:

Learning to love and follow Jesus—together—by His strength, in everyday 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 stay with your group, add to your group or even change groups and 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 at Foundations is to bring the extraordinary lifechanging 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.

Rhythms Overview

The individual rhythms (for those who 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 place to start is the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 5.

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

Silence: Choosing to avoid speaking in order to listen to what He might want to say to us.

Solitude: Avoidance of interaction with others in order to be alone with Him. Silence enhances solitude. Have you intentionally gotten away to be alone (including technology/social media)?

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. 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 individual 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 (for those who haven't taken the Rhythms course):

Worship gathering: A time for our family to be together to participate corporately in the rhythms of worshipping 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: An opportunity for our family to reflect on the person and work of Jesus and to look forward in hope to His coming again.

Baptism: A one-time action of a declaration of faith in Christ. It is our hope that everyone be baptized, and that they also celebrate others who are being baptized.

Using your gifts 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 neighbors: 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. Talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using a Psalm...they are really great prayers! Find one that you resonate with, and pray it aloud. Simply read through a Psalm, such as Psalm 23 or 51. 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 1, Read John 13:1-30

Background and Insights on the Reading:

This was the eve of the crucifixion and Jesus' final meal with His followers. He "rose from supper." When Jesus stood up, the disciples surely perked up. They may have thought Jesus was about to teach them something. He was, but without words. He then "laid aside His garments." Jesus hung His cloak on a hook and girded the towel around His waist. He then took a pitcher of water and emptied it into a bowl. The only sound was the splash as Jesus filled the basin. The next sound was the tap of the bowl as Jesus placed it on the floor. Then the shuffle of leather as He untied and removed the first of two dozen sandals. There was more splashing as Jesus placed two feet, dirty as they were, into the water. He massaged the toes. He cupped crusty heels in His hands. He dried the feet with His towel. He then stood, emptied the basin of dirty water, filled it with fresh, and repeated the process. Splash. Wash. Message. Dry.

How much time do you think this cleansing required? Supposing Jesus took two or three minutes per foot, this act would have taken the better part of an hour. Keep in mind, Jesus was down to His final minutes with His followers. He chose to use them in this silent sacrament of humility. Later that night the disciples realized the enormity of His gesture (i).

Here, Jesus explicitly states that what He's done is meant to be an example. He does not mean that all Christians are obligated to literally, physically wash the feet of others. The implication goes far beyond a ritual. The point is that those who "follow" Christ ought to "follow" His example in humility and service (h). Grace has happened to *you* too. Look at your feet. They are wet, grace soaked. Your toes and arches and heels have felt the cool basin of God's grace. Jesus has washed the grimeiest parts of your life. He didn't bypass you and carry the basin toward someone else. Can you share your grace with others? (i)

Questions for Reflection: This section shows Jesus in an act of humility and service toward the disciples. You could argue that the disciples didn't deserve this treatment from Jesus because they had all failed him in some way. When Jesus told the disciples to feed the five thousand, Philip retorted, "It's impossible!" James and John lobbied for cabinet-level positions in Christ's kingdom. Peter quit trusting Jesus in the storm, tried to talk Jesus out of going to the cross, and would even deny ever knowing Jesus. And yet Jesus washed all of the disciples' feet. *What does this tell you about your salvation in Christ?* (i)

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. Talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for others as an example (Ephesians 1:15-22). You can use this to pray for yourself and for others. Tell God you love Him. Ask God for spiritual wisdom and that He would reveal Himself in ways you can know Him more. Pray that you know the hope of His calling you. Pray that you would know the hope - the complete assurance - of the inheritance of the saints. Ask God that you would know the power He gives to those who believe. Praise Him for being the God who is above all rule and authority and has the name above all other names. Thank Him for being the head of the church.

Time in the Word, Day 2, Read John 13:31-38

Background and Insights on the Reading:

In verses 31-32 Jesus is referring to His death, resurrection, and ascension by which He will receive an exalted status from God – “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him” (a). His sacrificial death on the cross will also simultaneously solve two needs: justice for sin, and mercy for those loved by God. That the Creator would do something like that for His own creations is an incredible testament to His love, kindness, holiness, and power. The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus are pivotal moments in history - God is greatly glorified in what happens next, and in what it means for those who put their faith in Christ (h).

Vs. 34-35. To love one another was not a new command, but to love others as much as Christ loved others was revolutionary. In this context, we are to love others based on Jesus' sacrificial love for us. Such love will not only bring unbelievers to Christ, it will also keep believers strong and united in a world hostile to God. Jesus was a living example of God's love, as we are to be living examples of Jesus' love. Jesus says that our Christlike love will show we are His disciples. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Love is more than simply warm feelings; it is an attitude that reveals itself in action. How can we love others as Jesus loves us? By helping when it's not convenient, by giving when it hurts, by devoting energy to others' welfare rather than our own, by absorbing hurts from others without complaining or fighting back. This kind of loving is hard to do. That is why people notice when you do it and know you are empowered by a supernatural source (b).

Vs. 37-38. Peter proudly told Jesus that he was ready to die for him. But Jesus corrected him. He knew that Peter would deny that he knew Jesus that very night to protect himself. In our enthusiasm, it is easy to make promises, but God knows the extent of our commitment. Paul tells us not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought (Romans 12:3). Instead, demonstrate your commitment step-by-step as you grow in your knowledge of God's Word and in your faith (b).

Questions for Reflection:

What are some ways you can express love for others that may reflect ways that Jesus expressed His love for others?

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. Talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray using Paul's prayer of thanksgiving for others as an example (Colossians 1:3-12): When praying for others,
 - Be thankful for their faith and changed lives (1:3-4).
 - Ask God to help them know what He wants them to do (1-9).
 - Ask God to give them deep, spiritual understanding (1:9).
 - Ask God to help them live for Him (1:10).
 - Ask God to give them more understanding/knowledge of Himself (1:10).
 - Ask God to give them strength and patience for endurance (1:11).
 - Ask God to fill them with joy, strength and thankfulness (1:11,12).

Time in the Word, Day 3, Read John 14:1-14

Background and Insights on the Reading:

Here, Jesus speaks of heaven as "my Father's house" (John 14:2). Jesus tells His disciples that He is going to heaven in order to prepare a place for them, in order to eventually bring them there. Scripture regularly talks about heaven. It's the place where believers live in God's presence after death. The words Jesus uses to describe heaven here in John are significant, as they express the personal manner in which Jesus cares for his disciples in order to bring them safely home to heaven (f). They are also rich with promises. Jesus says, "I am going there to prepare a place for you," and "I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." We can look forward to eternal life because Jesus has promised it to all who believe in Him. Although the details of eternity are unknown, we need not fear because He is preparing for us and He will spend eternity with us (b).

In verse 6, Jesus says "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." That is the sixth of seven such "I AM" statements included in John's gospel. Jesus says He is the *only* way to the Father. Some people argue that this way is too narrow. In reality, it is wide enough for the whole world, if the world chooses to accept it. As the *way*, Jesus is our path to the Father. As the *truth*, He is the reality of all of God's promises. As the *life*, He joins His divine life to ours, both now and eternally. Jesus is, in truth, the only way to the living Father. Jesus' words show that the way to eternal life, though unseen, is secure – as secure as your trust in Jesus (b).

Questions for Reflection:

Jesus has already prepared the way to an eternal life with Him. How can knowing these promises now strengthen your faith and confidence to live for Him in your everyday life?

How often do you think about heaven – every day, occasionally, not at all? Why? What prompts you to think about heaven? (i)

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. Talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- 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). **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 in our relationship to God. **Thanksgiving** - simply tell God what you're thankful for. **Supplication** - ask God for the needs of the world, our country and leaders, our church, and anything and everything else. God wants to hear from you.

Time in the Word, Day 4, Read John 14:15-31

Background and Insights on the Reading:

John 14:15–31 contains a prediction about the Holy Spirit. Jesus refers to this as the Spirit of Truth, and promises that the Spirit will arrive to help the disciples carry on after Jesus is ascended to heaven. Throughout this section, a person's love for Christ, their obedience to His teachings, and the indwelling of the Spirit are intertwined (h).

HOLY SPIRIT. In this section of John, Jesus talks repeatedly about the Holy Spirit. As Jesus instructs his disciples on how to live and minister subsequent to his ascension, He emphasizes the point that only through the power of the Holy Spirit can His disciples carry out their mission to the world. Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as a "Helper" who will dwell in, guide, and empower His disciples. The entire New Testament emphasizes what Jesus stresses here: The Christian life cannot be lived apart from the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity (f).

PRAYER. The believer's prayer isn't simply spoken into thin air; we have the Holy Spirit, who communicates for us and carries our needs to the Lord. The Holy Spirit is part of the Trinity, so He knows the mind of God intimately (1 Corinthians 2:11). He fully grasps the circumstance we are praying over - even the parts that remain unseen or utterly confusing to us. Also, the Spirit dwells within every believer and knows each one's mind and heart. With this full knowledge, the Holy Spirit can carry out His responsibility to make sure our petitions match God's desires. Toward that end, He speaks in our spirit and opens our mind to Scripture. The fact that God gives His Spirit to all believers reveals the value He places on communication between Him and His children. And so, our heavenly Father provides the best possible Helper to ensure that we can be in tune with His will—in other words, wise, patient, and fully yielded to Him. But we'll have none of those qualities unless we are habitually talking with the Lord (l).

Questions for Reflection:

As soon as we trust in Jesus, His Spirit comes to abide with us forever (John 14:16).

- What are some things you might ask the Holy Spirit to help you with so that you can be more sensitive and reactive to His presence in your life?
- Jesus said the Holy Spirit is our helper. How do you think He empowers us to serve and obey God successfully and joyfully? What does that look like in someone's life?

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. Talk to God and be attentive to how He leads your thoughts and emotions.
- You may find it helpful to write down in a journal what you talked with God about and how He answered.
- If you are new to prayer, or struggle with focus, you may want to pray about this week's study using a prayer from Psalm 25:4-7. Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from old. Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.

Time in the Word, Day 5, Read John 15:1-17

Background and Insights on the Reading:

"I am the True Vine" (John 15:1) is the last of seven "I AM" declarations of Jesus recorded only in John's Gospel. Jesus said, "I am the True Vine" to closest friends gathered around Him. It was only a short time before Judas would betray Him; in fact, Judas had already left to do his infamous deed (John 13:30). Jesus was preparing the eleven men left for His pending crucifixion, His resurrection, and His subsequent departure for heaven. He had just told them that He would be leaving them (John 14:2). Knowing how disturbed they would feel, He gave them this lovely metaphor of the True Vine as one of His encouragements.

Jesus wanted His friends, not only those eleven, but those of all time, to know that He was not going to desert them, even though they would no longer enjoy His physical presence. His living energy - His spiritual reality - would continue to nourish and sustain them just as the roots and trunk of a grape vine produce the energy that nourishes and sustains its branches while they develop their fruit. Jesus wanted us to know that, even though we cannot see Him, we are as closely connected to Him as the branches of a vine are connected to its stem. Our desire to know and love Him and the energy to serve Him will keep flowing into and through us as long as we "abide" in Him.

Jesus went on to remove any misunderstanding about what He meant (John 15:4). He said that no branch can even live, let alone produce leaves and fruit, by itself. Cut off from the trunk, a branch is dead. Just as a vine's branches rely on being connected to the trunk from which they receive their energy to bear fruit, Jesus' disciples depend on being connected to Him for their spiritual life and the ability to serve Him effectively. The fruit we produce is that of the Holy Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Our source of life and spiritual fruit is not of ourselves; it is outside us, in Christ Jesus. We can live, live rightly, and serve Him effectively only if we are rightly connected to Him in a faith/love relationship (j).

Questions for Reflection:

- Jesus, the Savior, said we did not choose Him, rather, He chose us. *He chose you and He calls you His friend* (John 15: 14-16). What kind of friend do you consider Jesus to be?
- What kind of friend do you want to be to Jesus? Write down a few ways that abiding in Jesus can help you have a more faithful life for/with your friend Jesus?

Prayer, Day 6: A Time for Reflection

- Traditional time of Examen. This is a version of the five-step Daily Examen that St. Ignatius practiced.
- Become aware of God's presence. Breathe, and slow down. Ask God to make you aware of His presence and to bring to mind moments of your day to focus on.
- Review the day with gratitude. Walk through your day and give thanks for areas where you saw God "show up" and for His blessings.
- Pay attention to your emotions. 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.
- Choose one feature of the day and pray about it. 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.
- Look toward tomorrow. 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, Read John 15:18-27

Background and Insights on the Reading:

A running theme of Jesus' final teachings to the disciples is reassurance. They are about to see Jesus arrested and crucified. Afterwards, they will experience the tremendous opposition that plagued the early church. Bible-believing Christians throughout history have been brutally persecuted. At several points in this discourse, Jesus indicated that He was telling the disciples something in order to prepare them for the future.

The idea of being called out by God as separated people (1 Peter 2:9), chosen for something more honorable than sin (2 Timothy 1:8-9), makes Christians offensive to the unbelieving world. When Christian believers don't join in worldly sins, the world responds with hatred and mockery. Choosing to honor God shines an uncomfortable light on sin, and that "earns" the hatred of the world. Jesus' words here are meant to reassure Christians that persecution for faith is a sign that we're identified with Him. When we act in truly Christlike ways, and suffer for it, we can take comfort in knowing that it's further proof of the validity of our beliefs (Acts 5:41).

John 15:26. Another aspect of comfort that Jesus brings is predicting the influence of the Holy Spirit. Jesus uses the same term He applied in John 14:16, *paraklētos*, also translated as "helper," "counselor," "comforter," or "advocate." Part of the Holy Spirit's role in helping us endure persecution is reminding us of these teachings from Jesus (John 14:16; 16:13). The Spirit comes from God in exactly the same sense in which Christ comes from God (John 8:42; 14:26) (h).

Questions for Reflection:

- Do you think the Holy Spirit is with you right now, at this very moment? Why or why not?
- God wants you to know that you are not alone. You have the Holy Spirit to comfort you, teach you truth, and help you. How might you learn to recognize the promptings of the Holy Spirit?

Huddle Meeting:

General Check-In (10 minutes)

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?

Discussion for Growth (30 Minutes)

- Feel free to discuss any questions from the prior days' studies.
- Read John 15:4-10. According to this passage how do we produce fruit?

- "Fruit" is not limited to sharing your faith or serving in children's ministry. In this section (John 15:7, 11-12) answered prayer, joy and love are mentioned as fruit. Now read Galatians 5:22-24 and 2 Peter 1:5-8. What type of fruit do we bear when we abide in Christ?

- What is something new you learned about Jesus in this section? How could knowing this about Jesus change the way you relate to him in your everyday life? How could it change the way you relate to others?

Appendix

References

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