



# Facilitator's Guide

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## Introduction

Congratulations on your decision to facilitate a dwelling group to help people grow in their intimacy with Jesus. Many people, both new to the faith and long-time veterans, love God and are amazing people, but sometimes don't feel as connected to Jesus in their heart of hearts as they would like to be. Some people struggle to have regular devotional times with God.

Dwelling is an attempt to provide practical guidance to people seeking greater intimacy with Jesus, starting in the context of their devotional time.

This guide will prepare you to facilitate your group. What you'll find ahead is:

- background material on what dwelling is,
- general information to prepare you for facilitating your group, and
- specific information on each session.

Group members can either use the session material directly from the [website](#) on their devices, or you can have copies printed out for them beforehand from the [downloads](#) page of the website. **If your group will have some people using the website and some using printouts, make sure you have the latest version of the download for printouts as the content may change over time.**

While it is best to do the entire series, if you're not able to do the whole series, something is better than nothing at all. If you're not going to do the whole series, it's still best to begin with the first session (Getting Started).

## Dwelling Overview

### What is it?

Dwelling is a collection of sessions that help you to develop and deepen your relationship with God. You can go through the sessions on your own or in a group.

### Who is it for?

It's for people who say any of the following:

- I want to spend time with God but don't for some reason.
- I spend time with God, but I get quite distracted and not much happens.
- I read the Bible regularly but feel I am missing a heart connection with Jesus.

### Purpose

The purpose of dwelling is to practically equip people to deepen their heart relationship with God in Christ through their personal devotional times.

### Vision

The vision is to see the church with a greater intimacy with Christ so that she can more effectively share the love of God with all people in word and deed.

### Anchoring Scripture

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

## Sessions

There are six sessions in total. They are:

1. Getting Started
2. Spoken Praise and Worship
3. Meditation on Scripture
4. Gazing upon Christ
5. Confession and Repentance
6. Dwelling Outcomes

The first session, Getting Started, poses some key questions, and provides the motivation for dwelling. We look at the anchoring scripture and explore the concept of intimacy in our relationship with God.

The next four sessions introduce some tools that we can use in our personal devotional times with God to deepen and develop our intimacy with Him. These sessions have some background and scriptures for the group to read and work through together that are related to the new tool.

There is also time in each of these sessions for the group to spread out across the meeting venue, and for us to individually have our own place to practice the discipline that has been introduced. As the facilitator, you should plan beforehand to find areas of the venue that can be used for individual practice. As much as possible, try to find places where individuals will have some measure of privacy. **This immediate practical application is key:** people get to try out the new “tool” and then discuss how it went with the rest of the group. Group members are then encouraged to practice the new discipline in the coming week.

The final session, Dwelling Outcomes, looks at some of the outcomes of having greater intimacy with Christ, and how we can continue to pursue intimacy with Him in our everyday lives.

## Facilitator's Role

In dwelling, the group leader is a facilitator rather than a teacher. Each session has some background and scriptures related to the practice for the group to work through before practicing the discipline. Your role is to:

- ensure that everyone has a chance to participate in discussion, emphasizing the impact the material has on our hearts (rather than just going through the motions),
- keep the group focused on the session topic,
- create the appropriate space for individuals to experience practicing the principle,
- pray for the Holy Spirit to move in and guide group members during the individual practice times, and
- Encourage the group to practice the new tool in their personal times with God.

## Group Journey

The basic Journey of the dwelling sessions is:

- Welcome and Review of the previous session
- Open in prayer
- The Facilitator shares the goal of the session
- Group members take turns reading the core material out loud and engage in discussion questions along the way.
- For the practical sessions (Sessions 2-5)
  - The group practices the devotional tool together
  - The group breaks up so that individuals can engage in the devotional tool alone
  - The group comes back together to share their experiences
- Close in prayer and fellowship

## Session 1 Getting Started

### Goal

The goal of this session is to discuss why we want to develop intimacy with Jesus. This session serves as a motivation for and introduction to the series. It's also a time for people to get to know each other a little through the sharing of their stories of coming to Christ.

## Journey

### Motivation and Purpose

- Hold back on giving out notes until later.
- You (the Facilitator) open in prayer  
Go around the group and have each person introduce themselves.
- You give an introduction to the motivation for the series.
  - Read the questions at the beginning of the Getting Started session.
  - Discuss the question in the green box "Have any of the thoughts above ever gone through your head?"
  - Read the *Dwelling Purpose*

### Anchoring Scripture and Background

- Now pass out participants' notes for this session or have them reference their devices if they are following from the website.
- Have the group take turns reading aloud the sections from *Dwelling Anchoring Scripture* through *Filled Up*, one paragraph per person, or two if they're small paragraphs. Take time to discuss the questions at the end of each section.
- Put aside the notes and go around the group and have people share their story of coming to God through Christ. These stories should both build up the group and also provide insight into individuals' full understanding of the gospel and their experience of it (likely average of 5 minutes per person).

### Dwelling, Love and Intimacy

- Return to the notes at the *Dwelling, Love and Intimacy* section. Go around the group and have each person read a scripture and associated comment all the way through the *Road to Emmaus* section.

## Wrap Up

- You read the *Taking Stock* questions aloud and give the others time to write down some thoughts individually.
- Go around the group one more time and let people share why they have come and what they expect to get out of the sessions. They can share their thoughts on the *Taking Stock* questions if they want to. You might want to take notes and record these for later follow up.
  
- Conclude by reading the *Where to From Here?* section out loud.
- Ask someone to pray to close the session. No group prayer is necessary at the first session unless people know each other and are comfortable.
- General fellowship

## Session 2 Spoken Praise and Worship

### Goal

The goal of this session is to develop our prayer time in the area of praising and thanking God for who He is and what He has done as revealed in the Bible. This encourages a prayer life that goes beyond asking God for things and seeks to develop relationship with Him.

## Journey

### Review

- Welcome people to group
- Review: ask the group what they remember from the first session (anchoring scripture, purpose, other concepts/scriptures)
- Ask someone to open in prayer

### Share the Goal

- Share the goal of Spoken Praise and Worship with the group (above)
- Hand out the Session 2 participants' notes

### Discussion: Spoken Praise and Worship

- Read the Review section out loud.
- Have the group share the reading of the background material (from *First Earthly Dwelling Place of God* up to *Scripture and Sample Praise and Worship*)
- Give the group an opportunity to comment on the background material

### Scripture and Sample Praise and Worship

- Go around the group and have each person read a scripture and then read aloud the sample praise. Optionally you can read aloud 3-4 scriptures with sample praises as a group, then take some time for individuals to read a scripture silently, consider it and begin to form praise in their minds. This is an opportunity for the Holy Spirit to start warming people's hearts through the reading and hearing of scripture (15 minutes).
- Invite comments from the group on the process.

### Developing the Practice

- Have the group break up, sending each person to a different place within the venue to spend their personal praise time. Each person will take their sheet with all the scriptures and sample prayers. They can choose to use the sample prayers as a starter to their own prayers or just launch in. Take at least 15 minutes for this practice. Pray silently for each person by name as they go out.



## Wrap Up

- Call the group back together and give people an opportunity to discuss their experiences.
- Read the final paragraph out loud
- Ask someone to close in prayer
- General fellowship

## Session 3 Meditation on Scripture

### Goal

The goal of this session is for us to develop our time with God in the area of meditating on the truths of God and what He has done for us. We will use the cross as a focal point of our meditations in this session. Meditation encourages the truths God has shown us to move deeper into the core of our beings.

### Journey

#### Review

- Welcome people to group
- Read the Review section out loud and guide the group through the reflective questions.
- Ask someone to open in prayer

#### Share the Goal

- Share the goal of Spoken Praise and Worship with the group (above)
- Hand out the Session 3 participants' notes

#### Discussion: Meditation

- Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph from the *Meditation* section. Stop to discuss the reflective question at the end.

#### Practice with Examples

- Read the intro to the *Scripture Meditation Examples* section and then pray, asking God to teach our hearts how to meditate in the following sections.
- *Meditation 1*: Have one person read the scripture, and someone else read the next two paragraphs. Have another person read the Sample Meditation in the dark green box – slowly. Pause for a minute before going on the next meditation.
- Pause as directed for about two minutes of silence for the group to continue to meditate on the scripture that was read.
- Repeat this process for *Meditations 2, 3 and 4*.

#### Developing the Practice

- Read the intro paragraph out loud.
- Have the group break up, sending each person to a different place within the venue to spend their personal meditation time. Each person will take their sheet with all the scriptures and sample meditations. They can choose to use the sample meditations as a starter or just start with their own meditations. Take at least 15 minutes for this practice. Pray silently for each person by name as they go out and ask the Holy Spirit to empower them to meditate on the Word.

## Wrap Up

- Call the group back together and give people an opportunity to discuss how they went
- Read the final paragraph out loud
- Someone closes in prayer
- General fellowship

## Session 4 Gazing Upon Christ

### Goal

The goal of this session is for people to develop devotional habits of meditating on Christ himself in their hearts. The biblical focus is on the beauty and glory of Jesus.

### Journey

#### Review

- Welcome people to group
- Read the Review section out loud and guide the group through the reflective questions.
- Ask someone to open in prayer

#### Share the Goal

- Share the goal of Gazing Upon Christ with the group (above)
- Hand out the Session 4 participants' notes

#### Discussion: Gazing upon Christ

- Read the Introduction section out loud
- For the next five sections (from *Beauty and Gazing*, through *Distractions*), go around the group and have each person read a paragraph. Take a couple of minutes to discuss each of the reflective questions.

#### Gazing upon Christ Preparation

- Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph of Gazing upon Christ Preparation. Have them read slowly to prepare for fixing their eyes on Jesus.

#### Gazing upon Christ Example

- Invite the group to listen to you as you read the text of the first example in the green box. They may close their eyes if they wish. Read very slowly and clearly so the group can easily hear everything you say and focus on Christ. Pause for two minutes.
- Repeat this process for the second group of examples, making sure to pause for continued quiet gazing at the end of each example.

#### Developing the Practice

- Have the group break up, sending each person to a different place within the venue to spend their personal time gazing upon Christ. Take at least 10 minutes for this practice. The group can use the examples above as a starting point, or they can

simply continue on as the Spirit leads. Pray silently for each person by name as they go out to gaze upon Christ individually.

### Wrap Up

- Call the group back together and give people an opportunity to discuss how they went
- Read the last two paragraphs to conclude the session
- Remind people to use scriptural truths of who Christ is and what He has done when they gaze upon Christ
- Someone closes in prayer
- General fellowship

## Session 5 Confession and Repentance

### Goal

The goal of this session is for us to get deep heart understanding of the holiness of God together with our sin. This should lead to confession and repentance becoming more significant in our devotional times.

### Journey

#### Review

- Welcome people to group
- Read the Review section out loud and encourage discussion
- Ask someone to open in prayer

#### Share the Goal

- Share the goal of Confession and Repentance with the group (above)
- Hand out the Session 5 participants' notes

#### Discussion: Confession and Repentance

- Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph from the sections *Sin*, *The Cross*, *Confession* and *Repentance*. Stop to discuss the reflective questions, or pause to meditate as directed in the boxes. There is a lot of reading here, so be sure to encourage interaction where appropriate.

#### Practice

- Read the first paragraph of the Practice section
- Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph and scripture from the Practice section. Observe pauses as directed. Tell the group when it is time to read the next paragraph.

#### Developing the Practice

- Have the group break up, sending each person to a different place within the venue to spend their personal time in confession and repentance. Take at least 15 minutes for this practice. Pray silently for each person by name as they go out individually.

#### Wrap Up

- Call the group back together and give people an opportunity to discuss how they went
- Read the last paragraph to conclude the session
- Someone closes in prayer
- General fellowship

## Session 6 Dwelling Outcomes

### Goal

The goal of this session is for us to see that Christ dwelling in us results in external as well as internal change. The external change involves loving others and each of us can seek God for what that specifically means for us.

### Journey

#### Review

- Welcome people to group
- Read the Review section out loud. Read the questions at the end of the section and encourage discussion
- Ask someone to open in prayer

#### Share the Goal

- Share the goal of Dwelling Outcomes with the group (above)
- Hand out the Session 6 participants' notes

#### Discussion: Dwelling Outcomes

- Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph from the *Transformation* section through *Command to Love*, stopping to discuss the reflective questions. Pause in silence for each person to reflect on the question in the white box.

#### Wrap Up

- Read the first paragraph of *24/7 Dwelling* and discuss the questions in the green box. Go around the group and have each person read a paragraph or scripture. Discuss the final question in the green box.
- Thank the group for sharing the dwelling journey together, and encourage them to continue to seek to deepen their heart relationship with God in Christ through their personal devotional times.
- Someone closes in prayer
- General fellowship

## Conclusion

Whether you have facilitated one session or the entire series, by faith you have been making a positive kingdom impact on the lives of people in your group. Pray for your group person by person in between the sessions and after the series has finished as Paul prayed for the church in Ephesus.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:14-19)

May Christ dwell richly in your heart as the Father continues to strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being.