



**WEEK OF December 17 – December 23 / GROUP TIME GUIDE**

This guide is given to aide in the facilitation of leading your small group. It is only an aid for you to experience Christ together.

**ABIDE: BIG PICTURE TOGETHER**

**Start with Purpose** – It’s always important to hear from God’s Word why we are doing what we are doing! **Have someone read aloud, 1 Corinthians 3:9**

Discuss these questions in your group: Why do we need one another to fulfill this scripture? How does small group fit into this passage? What’s the point of us doing life together?

**ABIDE: LISTEN TOGETHER**

This time of listening to God together is vitally important as the Body of Christ. Let this time lead you into praying together and allowing Jesus to speak to you as a group.

- If you want, sing a song together either with an iPod or with somebody leading from the group.
- This may be a time to simply gaze upon God individually too for a moment and waiting for Him to bring to mind things that need to be said to each other.
- Spend a few moments listening to God through scripture by allowing the Word to speak to and through your group. Feel free to ask group members to use scriptures to encourage another. Nothing is more powerful than using God’s Truth to encourage and edify another. God uses His Word through His Body to build up the Body.

**CONNECT: LOVE TOGETHER**

Use this time to catch up with everyone and ask if there are any prayer requests or matters needing attention. It can be uncomfortable for people to share about themselves and many will want to hear from others, don’t let them ignore their personal needs! This is a time for Jesus to shepherd your group through the group. This is one of the few times during the week where our church can accomplish the “one another” lifestyle. Make sure to try and see if there has been any progress in recent requests, praise is equally as important as prayers

*“Encourage one another daily...” — Hebrews 3:13*

After you’ve prayed, let them know that our group meets all the time. Continue this week to show love by meeting needs. We all are called to pastor the church.

## **CONNECT: TEACH TOGETHER:**

Ask someone in the group (or a few people) to read **Matthew 1:18-25** out loud and then answer and discuss the following questions together:

1. Pastor Vance opened by discussing the struggle of getting caught up in all the ways we celebrate Christmas that we lose sight of *why* we celebrate Christmas.
  - a. **What are some of the distractions we must fight in order to focus on the true meaning of Christmas?**
  - b. **How can we balance enjoying the holidays while not losing sight of the meaning behind the holidays?**
2. Pastor Vance gave us two phrases that summarize what we are really celebrating at Christmas. The first phrase was, “**God came to us.**” From this he taught something miraculous, ordinary, and and divine about Jesus’ birth.
  - a. **What was miraculous about Jesus’ birth?**
  - b. **What was ordinary about Jesus’ birth?**
  - c. **What was divine about Jesus’ birth?**
  - d. **What do these three things tell us about Jesus?**
3. Secondly, Pastor Vance taught, “**God came for us.**” From this point he shared with us this powerful quote from Clyde Cranford, “*Had there been no Babe in Bethlehem’s manger, there could have been no sacrifice on Calvary’s cross.*”
  - a. **Why did we need be saved? What did we need to be saved from? How was this accomplished through Jesus’ coming?**
  - b. **What did Clyde mean by his quote up above? Discuss it among your group.**
4. We wrapped up our service Sunday by taking the Lord’s Supper. The design and purpose of the Lord’s Supper is simply to remember the cross, and examine ourselves. Pastor Vance challenged us with these questions, take time to read aloud and reflect on these questions:
  - a. **Is there anything in my life that I know is not right with God?**
  - b. **Is there anything between myself and a brother/sister in Christ?**

## **SHARE: MOBILIZE TOGETHER**

1. Pray for a lost family member, friend, coworker, etc.
2. Pray for our church, that God would inspire and move people to fill areas of need with their unique and God-given grace gift.
3. Pray for our Christmas Eve services this upcoming Sunday. Don’t forget to invite a friend, coworker, family member, etc.