

# SPIRITUAL FORMATION GROUP

## Order of Meeting

### Opening words

After a few moments of silence, the leader for the week reads the following Opening Words aloud.

*Welcome to the Spiritual Formation Group. May God's Holy Spirit bless us, and may we find fellowship and encouragement during this time together.*

*We gather together with one aim – to become better disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this by encouraging one another to keep Jesus' word, which, as he said, is what we naturally do when we love him (John 14.23–24). Through the grace of mutual accountability, we strive to inspire one another to love and good works.*

*Everything said here is in confidence and stays within these walls. Only then can we feel free to share honestly. This is how we help each other.*

### Covenant

As a group, read the Covenant aloud and in unison.

*In utter dependence upon Jesus Christ as my ever-living Saviour, Teacher, Lord and Friend, I will seek continual renewal through spiritual exercises, spiritual gifts, and acts of service.*

### Common disciplines

Beginning with the leader, take turns reading the six Common Disciplines aloud:

*By God's grace, I will set aside time regularly for prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading and will seek to practise the presence of God.*

*By God's grace, I will strive mightily against sin and will do deeds of love and mercy.*

*By God's grace, I will welcome the Holy Spirit, exercising the gifts and nurturing the fruit while living in the joy and power of the Spirit.*

*By God's grace, I will endeavour to serve others everywhere I can and will work for justice in all human relationships and social structures.*

*By God's grace, I will share my faith with others as God leads and will study the Scriptures regularly.*

*By God's grace, I will joyfully seek to show forth the presence of God in all that I am, in all that I do, in all that I say.*

## **Reading and reflection**

If you wish to include a suitable Bible passage then do so here. Relate this to the Questions of the Heart that follow. Alternatively include a short passage from a classic Christian spiritual book on the same themes, or simply move straight on to the next section.

## **Questions of the heart**

Beginning with the leader, each member shares experiences from the previous week. The following may help focus the discussion. Answer at least the *first* question in each set.

In what ways has God made his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation and spiritual reading has God given you? What difficulties or frustrations have you encountered? What joys and delights?

What temptations have you faced since we met? How did you respond? Which disciplines has God used to lead you further into holiness of heart and life?

Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since we last met? What spiritual gifts has He enabled you to exercise? What was the outcome?

What fruit of the Spirit would you like to see increase in your life? Which disciplines might be useful in the effort?

What opportunities has God given you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Have you encountered any injustice to, or oppression of, others? Have you been able to work for justice or shalom?

Has God provided an opportunity for you to share your faith since we met? How did you respond? In what ways have you encountered Christ in your reading of the Scriptures? How has the Bible shaped the way you think and live?

In what ways have you been able to manifest the presence of God through your daily work since our last meeting? How has God fed and strengthened you through the ministry of word and sacrament?

## Looking ahead

Beginning with the leader, allow time for each member to share his or her plans for the coming week. These questions may be used as guidelines. Writing these commitments down will help you remember what others are doing and give you a chance to pray for them.

On which area or areas would you like to work this week? What specific exercise or exercises would you like to try?

After each person has had a chance to share, the leader asks if anyone has a particular need or knows of situations that would benefit from prayer. Members can make notes of these so that they can pray for them during the week ahead. The leader also invites someone to lead the group in prayer for these concerns.

## The Lord's Prayer

Finish by saying this (or another) version of the Lord's Prayer aloud, possibly joining hands.

*Our Father, who art in heaven  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done*

*on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread,  
and forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen*

## **Closing words**

After the Lord's Prayer, the leader ends the meeting by reading the following Closing Words aloud and then asking for a volunteer to lead the next meeting.

*Please remember that what we have heard here was spoken in confidence and should remain so. May the love, peace, and power of God be with us during this week.*