

GOALS FOR THE GROUP LEADER

Help the group members to see:

1. that God teaches us how to react to injustice: by forgiving and by making peace
2. that our problems are God's possibilities. God uses our trials and temptations to develop our character

I. WORSHIP (14 min.)

1. Prayer

Pray that God will guide us through his Spirit; that we will be aware of his presence and that we will listen to what he says.

2. Meditation

Worship is to submit to God's peace.

Theme: God is the Peacemaker

Read the Bible verses mentioned below and the explanation. Or explain the verses in your own words.

Romans 5:1-10

¹Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

⁶You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

What does it mean: 'to be God's enemies'?

Are people in their natural state hostile against God and do they regard God as an enemy?

Or is God angry against people in their natural state and regards them as his enemies?

➤ *Peace exists in three relationships*

○ *First, GOD makes peace with us*

In our natural state, before our rebirth, God regards us as his 'enemies', that is, as people who stand in the wrong relationship to him, who wrong other people and who wrong themselves. That is why God must be angry with us. God's 'wrath' is his holy and righteous anger against all ungodliness and unrighteousness in the world (Romans 1:18)! God "hates all who do wrong" (Psalm 5:5). His "soul hates all the wicked and those who love violence" (Psalm 11:5). If God couldn't care about the wrong people do and if he would not punish wrongdoing, he would be an unrighteous God!

God remains angry with people who do not believe in Jesus Christ and who live in disobedience to Jesus Christ (John 3:18,36). The word: 'enemies' (verse 10) stands parallel with the words: 'godless' (verse 6) and 'sinners' (verse 8).

However, God's wrath and enmity is never accompanied by *feelings of hatred* and unrighteous *acts* (as with people). God's wrath, hatred and enmity always remain perfectly holy and completely righteous! God's wrath is never 'sinful' (cf. Ephesians 4:26). Only in the being of God is righteousness and love in complete harmony with each other!

God's love is shown in that he took the first step to win us back to him and to make peace with us. It is not we, but he who took the initiative! The sacrifice of atonement of Jesus Christ on the cross removed God's holy and righteous anger (hatred, enmity) against our sins. That is why God was able to reconcile himself to us. Through the cross of Jesus Christ God made peace with us. He is no longer hostile towards us!

○ *Then, we are able to make peace with God*

We receive and have peace with God only when we begin to believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1-2). Only when we accept his completed work of salvation, are we able to experience perfect peace with God. The Holy Spirit applies Christ's work of salvation in the lives of individual believers. 'Peace' is one of its fruits (Galatians 5:22-23). Through faith in Jesus Christ we make peace with God, are no longer hostile towards him and experience peace in our hearts!

○ *Finally, we can make peace with each other*

Ephesians 2:14-16

¹⁴For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

Only when we have experienced how God made peace with us, are we able to make peace with our enemies.

During the Old Testament period the ceremonial law became 'a wall of hostility' between believers coming from Jewish background and believers coming from Gentile background. Jewish and Gentile believers could not live and worship together in peace and harmony.

But the death of Jesus Christ on the cross 'fulfilled' the ceremonial law (Matthew 5:17) and consequently 'cancelled' (Colossians 2:14) and 'abrogated' (Ephesians 2:14-15) it so that it no longer could bring division between Christians coming from Jewish background and Christians coming from Gentile background. So people from different nations and cultures can make peace with one another and can live in harmony with each other only after they have made peace with God through Jesus Christ!

Jesus Christ says: "Blessed are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9). He expects that we take the initiative to make peace with people who are hostile against us. And Paul says: "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone" (Romans 12:18).

➤ *Peace consists of two directions*

The word 'peace' in the Bible has two meanings:

○ *Peace is the absence of negative things*

Peace is the absence of quarrelling, war, anger, irritation, agitated feelings, fear, moral and spiritual conflicts. Usually this is the meaning of the word 'peace' in the world.

○ *Peace is the presence of positive things*

Peace is the presence of restoration and wholeness. Peace is making whole what was broken before (e.g. illustration of mending a broken Chinese vase in such a way that one cannot see that it was broken). Peace is the restoration of a broken relationship; resuming a goal that was prematurely terminated; the healing of hurt feelings; the accomplishment of God's purpose in your life.

People feel 'broken' when one of their parents die early in life; when their parents divorce; when a parent becomes an addict; or when a person has lived in sin for a period of time. God in Christ is able to make such brokenness completely 'whole' again, as if that sad event never happened! God is a far better Father, Mother, Parent or Example for you than any earthly father, mother or parent!

God not only forgives your previous sins, but also removes the consequences of that sin in your life. To remove the enmity or brokenness may take time – even a long time. But God is not only the Great Peacemaker. He is also the Great Healer (Physician)!

➤ *Peace is based on truth, not on feelings*

John 8:31-32, 36

³¹To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. ³²Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

³³They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

³⁴Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. ³⁵Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

The truth of God's Word (the Bible) is the only permanent basis for peace.

While one's feelings change a lot due to one's circumstances, the truth (in the Bible) never changes! Only the truth will set a person free from bonds in the mind, bonds in the feelings or bonds in relationships.

However, lack of peace in your feelings is not always based on the truth. One can be plagued by false guilt, false shame and a lack of peace due to difficult circumstances. A low self-esteem or anxiety about God not taking care of you may be lies coming from the devil (cf. John 8:44; Ephesians 6:16).

Lack of peace is often unavoidable. For example: doing something that is good in God's eyes brings peace in your heart. That is the real peace of which God speaks about. But doing what is good in God's eyes may also bring about opposition from people who hate what you are doing. Their opposition and hatred against you may cause feelings of anxiety, fear and confusion. But those feelings of anxiety, fear and confusion need not take away your peace with God! It is possible to have both at the same time. Always make a clear distinction between the deep conviction in your heart (real peace) that you are doing what is right in God's eyes and the turbulent emotions caused by people's reactions and by difficult circumstances.

Lack of peace in your heart and even in your relationships can be caused by refusing to do God's will or by putting off what God wants you to do.

Peace in your heart and in your relationships will be restored when you submit to God and immediately obey his Word. God is not only the Peacemaker, but also the Deliverer of bonds.

3. Worship

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to worship God (in one or two sentences) as the Peacemaker.

II. INTRODUCTION THEME (1 min.)

The theme for this meeting is: Bitterness and forgiveness

Read or explain in your own words.

1. There is much unrighteousness in human history

God speaks and acts in human history. Nevertheless there is also very much unrighteousness in human history! Wickedness is caused by all people who do not submit to the God of the Bible. We ourselves have experienced the unjust and unfair treatment of people around us. The fall into sin taught us why there is godlessness and wickedness in the world.

2. How should we react to unrighteousness in the world?

What can we do when injustice strikes us? What should we do when other people are treated with injustice?

III. SHARING OF QUIET TIMES (30 min.)

Let everyone in the small group take a turn to share (or read) what he has learned from one of the assigned quiet times.

Theme: Bitterness and forgiveness

Day 1	Matthew 5:38-42 Reaction to unreasonable treatment (cf. 1 Peter 2:19-25)
Day 2 ^{BS}	Matthew 18:21-35 Heartily forgive
Day 3	Romans 12:17-21 Conquer evil by doing good
Day 4	Genesis 37:1-36 Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his family
Day 5	Genesis 39:1-23 Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his employer
Day 6	Genesis 40:1-23 Joseph suffers unreasonable treatment by his friends

Day 7	Genesis 41:25-57 Joseph is appointed to a high position after 17 years of suffering
Day 8	Genesis 45:1-11 Joseph's response to his unreasonable treatment
Day 9	Genesis 50:15-21 Joseph does not take revenge
Day 10	Psalms 38:1-23 Dealing with hurt feelings

IV. ADDITIONAL SHARING (15 min.)

Part IV is optional.
If after sharing quiet times there is still time left over, the following may serve as subjects for conversation.

1. Discussing the study

Discuss the study with reference to the questions mentioned below:

Theme: Bitterness and forgiveness

- What is bitterness?
- Why do people get embittered?
- How do people react in their bitterness towards other people?
- How can you learn to let go of bitterness and react in the right way to unjust treatment?
- What injustices did Joseph suffer and how did he respond?
- How should Christians respond to unjust treatment according to Jesus?
- How should Christians respond to unjust treatment according to Paul and Peter?
- How should we deal with our hurt feelings?
- What is the significance of trials?

2. Commitment

Let the group members consider the following questions and record their answers:

- "Who should you still forgive? What are you going to do about it?"
- "Should we understand God's intention before or after the difficult event? Why or why not?"
- "What is God's purpose with your life in this difficult phase?"
- "How does God use these difficulties to develop you?"

3. Personal sharing

Discuss personal growth and commitment. Who would like to share a difficulty or blessing in his/her personal life? What are your thoughts or feelings?

V. MEMORISATION (5 min.)

1. Review previous Bible verses

Let pairs of group members review each other's previously memorised Bible verses (the last memorised Bible verse or the last 5 memorised Bible verses).

2. Memorisation of the new Bible verse

Explain the meaning of the new Bible verse.

FORGIVENESS Luke 17:3

So watch yourselves.
If your brother sins, rebuke him,
and if he repents, forgive him.

Luke 17:3 (NIV)

3. Memorisation of the Bible books

The 5 books of the law:

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.
The 12 historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth,
1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra,
Nehemiah, Esther.

VI. BIBLE STUDY (45 min.)

Theme: The parable of the unmerciful servant

1. Bible Study

Make use of the method of studying parables in the Bible and study:

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²²Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times (or: seventy times seven).

²³Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'

²⁷The servant's master took pity on him, cancelled the debt and let him go.

²⁸"But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

²⁹"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be

patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

³⁰"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³²"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I cancelled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' ³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

2. Emphasis

- Mercy and forgiveness are very important in God's kingdom! Wherever God is King, there people forgive one another!
- What is important is not the size of the debt, but the attitude of the creditor.
- Also important is the way in which he forgives: from his heart.
- Very important is the warning in Matthew 6:14-15.
- Forgiveness does not exclude the following:
 - Protest against injustice (Deuteronomy 10:17-19; Deuteronomy 16:18-20; Matthew 5:9; Luke 6:29-32)
 - And the need to discipline the unrepentant sinner (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13).

3. Explanation for the group leader

(The Bible study method for studying parables)

[Step 1] Understand the story of the parable

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The parable is told in figurative language and the spiritual meaning is based on that.

What are the true-to-life elements of the story?

The story of this parable has three parts: (18:23-34)

(1) A king shows mercy to one of his subjects by forgiving a very large debt.

The 'servant' of this king was not an ordinary slave, but a very high official, probably a governor (satrap) of one of the king's provinces. It was his task to gather the taxes of the king and pay it off at certain set times. But he was not able to pay the debt of ten thousand talents. One talent

was equal to six thousand denarii and one denarius was the salary of a day-labourer or soldier. he would have to work for twenty years to earn one talent! The ten thousand talents represent a debt that would be impossible to repay! The story does not tell us why he accumulated such a debt. Maybe he neglected to gather the taxes. Maybe he gambled it all away.

The king ordered that the servant and his family be sold in slavery. This practice was very common in the surrounding nations. But the man humbled himself before the king and begged the king to have patience. He did not deny his guilt. He must have known that he would never be able to repay the debt. Nevertheless he promised to pay back the whole sum! He did not say this because he was serious, but because he tried to escape the terrible punishment! The king felt compassion, forgave him and let him go. The king gave the servant much more than he had asked or what he expected!

The first part of the parable shows the great and undeserved mercy of the king.

(2) The first servant refuses to forgive the debt of another servant.

The first servant met another servant who owed him only 100 denarii. That person's debt was six hundred thousand times smaller than his own debt! Before the second slave could say a word he grabbed him by the throat and demanded immediate payment of the debt. The story does not tell why the first servant was so heartless. Maybe his pride was injured, because he had failed to be a good steward for his master.

Also the second servant humbled himself before the first servant. He begged him to be patient and he promised to pay back some money. He was more realistic than the first servant who promised to pay back all the money. However, the first servant was merciless, showed no patience and put him in prison until he had paid back the loan. Because the debt of the second servant was so small, it was illegal to sell him into slavery. But it was legal to make him do forced labour until he had paid off his debt. In the surrounding countries it was common to torture prisoners to force them to tell where they had hidden the money or to force their family and friends to pay off the debt.

The second part of the story shows the cruelty of the first servant. He himself had received mercy, but he refused to show mercy.

(3) The king increased the punishment of the first servant.

When the other servants saw the cruelty of the first servant, they reported the matter to the king. The king summoned the first servant and said that he was a wicked servant, because he had shown no mercy to the second

servant. He should have shown him mercy just as the king had shown mercy to him. He should have followed the example of the king.

With determined indignation the king handed the first servant over to the torturers until he had paid back his debt.

The third part of the story shows the severe punishment of people that show no mercy.

[Step 2] Study the context of the parable and determine the elements of the parable

The context of the parable consists of three parts:

- (1) The background (18:15-22), which consists of the occasion for telling the parable and the circumstances. The occasion here was the question: "How many times must a Christian forgive?"
- (2) The story (18:23-34)
- (3) The explanation or the application (18:35)

The context of the parable (18:15-22)

18:15-17. *Christian discipline*

Within the Christian community there should be discipline. There should be certain rules and prerequisites for faith (doctrine) and behaviour (ethics) that help a Christian to return to Christ and his brothers. The purpose of Christian discipline is not to cut the person off from the Christian fellowship, but to draw him back to Christ and into the Christian fellowship. Christian discipline has four steps:

➤ *Show him his fault*

When a brother or sister sins against another brother or sister (cf. Luke 17:3) the Christian 'shows the offender his fault' (Greek: *elencho*) under four eyes.

This word means: to 'expose' sin (Ephesians 5:11-13); to 'rebuke' the sinner (2 Timothy 4:2); to 'refute' his arguments (Titus 1:9), to 'convince/convict' him of his wrong (John 16:8); and if necessary to 'chastise/punish' him (Hebrews 12:5; cf. Proverbs 13:24). The purpose of discipline is to win/save the person (Matthew 18:15b)!

➤ *Involve a third person*

If the offender does not listen, the Christian should involve a brother (or sister) and confront the offender a second time.

➤ *Involve the council of elders*

If that fails, the council of elders representing the whole congregation should discipline the offender.

➤ *Treat him as an unbeliever*

If there is no remorse or repentance, then the whole congregation should treat him as an unbeliever (i.e. not

to despise him, but as someone who needs to turn to Christ as his Saviour).

18:18-20. Christian authority

Christ gave to his apostles 'the keys of the kingdom' (Matthew 16:19; 18:18) in connection to Christian discipline (Matthew 18:15-17). The 'keys' are a symbol of their authority. The apostles of Christ had the authority 'to bind or to loosen'¹ – that is, to prohibit or allow a particular matter, to exclude or include a person from the community.

For example: the apostle Peter had authority to punish Ananias and Sapphira for lying about money and to exclude them from the community (Acts 5:1-11), but also authority to include Gentile believers in the Christian Church (Acts chapters 10-11). And the apostle Paul had authority to blind the sorcerer, Elymas, for opposing the proclamation of the gospel (Acts 13:6-12) or to turn away from the antagonistic Jews in Antioch (in Asia Minor), but also authority to welcome the Gentile believers into the Christian Church (Acts 13:38-48).

Also Christians toDay have authority to exercise Christian discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:9-13), but only in agreement with the Bible. However, when someone is unjustly excluded from the community, Christ welcomes him (John 9:34)!

18:21-22. Christian forgiveness

Peter realised that the wronged person had to take the initiative to forgive, but wanted to know how many times he should show mercy and forgive the offender. The Jewish teachers taught that a person must forgive an insult three times, but after that punish the offender. 'Forgiveness' had become a measureable substance, which one could measure out until a certain limit had been reached. Beyond that limit one must not forgive anymore! Likewise Peter thought that forgiving someone seven times would be very reasonable.

But Jesus answered that forgiveness could not be expressed in any measureable quantity. Forgiveness was a foundational attitude that remains in force at all times and under all circumstances. To forgive someone 'seventy times seven' every Day does not mean 490 times. In the Jewish symbolism of numbers 'seven' was the number of divine perfection and 'ten' was the number of human completeness. By multiplying these numbers with one another, Jesus taught that forgiveness did not acknowledge any form of limitation. Forgiveness is an attitude of the heart (Matthew 18:35) and not a calculable activity!

¹ Rabbinical terminology for prohibiting or allowing.

[Step 3] Identify the relevant details in the story of the parable

18:23-34. The relevant details in the story

A parable is not an allegory. Jesus did not intend every detail in the story of the parable to have some spiritual significance. The relevant details are those details in the story of the parable that reinforce the main theme or message of the parable. Therefore Christians may not ascribe significance to every detail of the story in a parable.

➤ *The 'king' and his two 'servants' are relevant (18:23)*

The application (18:35) shows that 'the king' represents God the Father, that 'the first servant' represents every Christian (you and me) and that 'the second servant' represents the offender. The 'compassion' of God the Father is the compassion and forgiveness you and I owe to those people who do wrong to us.

➤ *The 'ten thousand talents' is relevant (18:24)*

This enormous great amount represents the debt natural man (you and me) owes to God the Father. It is a number that no one in history could repay! This would be humanly impossible!

➤ *The 'hundred denarii' is relevant (18:28)*

This small amount represents the debt of a fellowman to the Christian (you and me). Although it is a large amount (equal to three months of salary), it nevertheless is possible to repay! By God's grace every Christian can forgive his fellowman.

These two numbers do not represent one or other specific sin or any measureable amount of sin!

➤ *The 'torturers' are relevant (18:34)*

Jesus does not ascribe any special meaning to them. But from the rest of the Bible we can derive the conclusion that the torturers represent the last judgement. Then every person will be judged according to his deeds (including his failure to forgive others who wronged him) (cf. Ecclesiastes 12:14; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

We must not ascribe specific significance to the other details of the story in the parable. They only enhance the true-to-life story of the parable.

➤ *The practice to sell debtors into slavery is not relevant (18:25)*

The story refers to the general practice in the surrounding nations to sell people who could not repay their debt into slavery. From the time of Moses to the time of the exile this was also practised in Israel (cf. 2 Kings 4:1), but God greatly limited the practice. A thief could be sold into slavery if he could not repay his debt (Exodus 22:2). But an Israelite sold into slavery could not be treated as a slave in his time, but became 'a hired worker' or 'a

temporary resident' (a day-labourer living with his master). In the Year of Jubilee he had to be set free (Leviticus 25:10,39-43). When the person sold was a woman and her master does not provide her with food, clothing and marital rights, he had to let her go free without any repayment of the debt (Exodus 21:7-11).

In the period of the kings this practice together with usury and extortion was strongly condemned by the prophet Amos (788-737 B.C.) (Amos 2:6; 8:5-6). God made it very clear that Israel was sold into exile (607-538 B.C.), not by God, but due to her own sins (Isaiah 50:1). After the exile slavery was sharply condemned by the governor Nehemiah (Nehemiah 5:1-13).

➤ *The practice to torture people is not relevant (18:34)*

The story also refers to another practice known in the Ancient Middle East. 'The torturers' were appointed by the judges to torture people who had committed atrocious crimes in the community. Just as slavery, torture is not approved, but is mentioned to enliven the story, because it was a practice known at that time.

During the last judgement God will 'pay back a double portion' to the whole godless culture of the world, symbolised by the city of Babylon (Revelation 18:4-8). This does not mean that the punishment would be twice as heavy as the crime deserves, but rather that the punishment would be the exact equivalent of the crime. Because no atonement was made for her sins, her punishment would be exactly equivalent to what her sins deserve. The wicked culture of the world practised unmerciful and cruel torturing of her citizens. God's last judgement will be perfectly just (cf. Revelation 15:3-4).

[Step 4] Identify the message of the parable

The message of the parable can be found in the explanation or application of the parable or it must be derived from the story itself. From the way in which Jesus Christ explained and applied parables we know that a parable normally has only one message. That is why we should not ascribe a spiritual significance to every detail of the parable, but must seek to discover that one message

18:35. The application of the parable

The message of this parable is found in the explanation or application of Jesus. This parable deals with 'forgiveness in God's kingdom'.

The central point of comparison is that there exists a direct relationship between the forgiveness we receive from God and the forgiveness we grant to those who offend us.

A Christian whom God has forgiven all his sins (cf. Psalm 103:3; Isaiah 38:17; Jeremiah 31:34; Micah 7:19) must forgive those who wrong him (Matthew 6:12,14,15)! He should not only do this because he is thankful towards God, but as a responsibility, a duty! God demands that Christians follow his example and forgive the offender from their heart. The Christian must let go of his (human) rights and allow God's mercy to triumph over his rights (James 2:13)! Christian love excludes natural self-love (Luke 9:23)!

'Forgiveness' is one of the foundational characteristics of the kingdom of God, that is, God's reign in the hearts and lives of his people. The people in God's kingdom may not be unmerciful and cruel towards their brother or sister who goes into the wrong, but must forgive again and again (Matthew 6:12,14-15)! "Judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgement" (James 2:13)!

[Step 5] Check the message by looking at cross-references

All parables have similar or contrasting truths that are taught in other Bible passages. Always check the explanation or application of a parable with the truth in the whole Bible.

For example, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will also not forgive your sins" (Matthew 6:12, 14-15).

VII. PRAYER (8 min.)

Pray with one another in response to what God said to you during this gathering. Let every group member take a turn to pray one or two sentences about what God taught him during this meeting.

Pray with one another for one another (Romans 15:30) and for other people (Colossians 4:12).

VIII. THE NEXT MEETING (2 min.)

Hand out the preparation for the next gathering.