

Life Group Notes

These notes are to serve you as you lead your group.

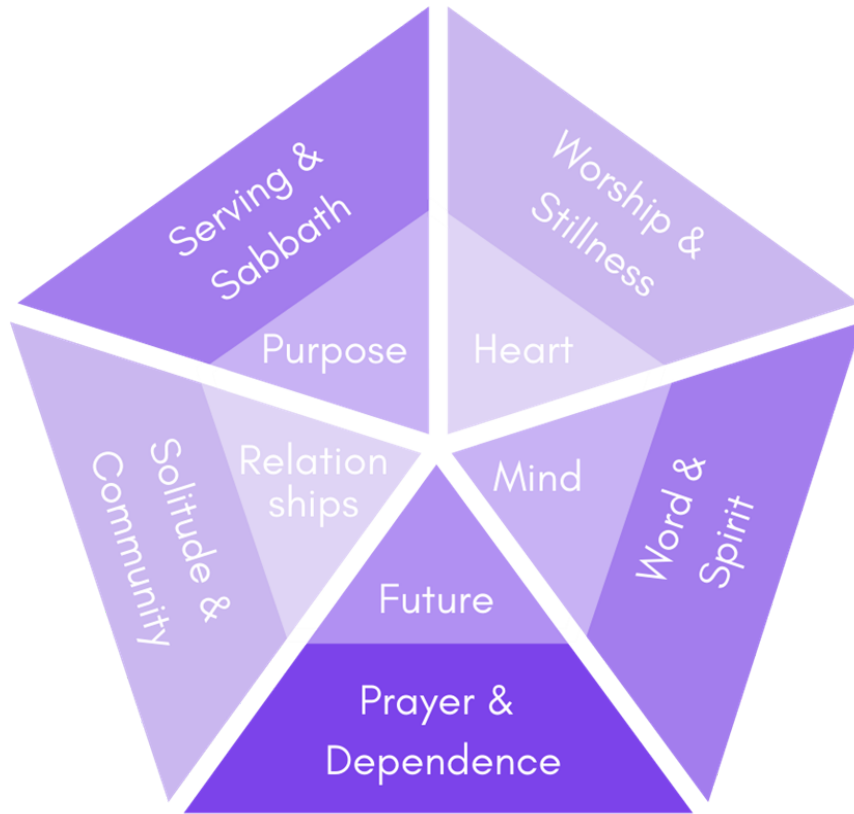
Please feel free to select the passages and only use the questions which are most relevant to your group and for the way you want to lead the session. (There are more questions here than you'll need)

- *Please choose (or adapt) the questions which you believe will bring about the most honest, faith-building and life changing conversations, and add others if you want to.*
- *The readings and questions develop from one section to the next. Please take time to move through the ones you want to use, giving time for discussion and sharing - ideally leading to a response to God's word.*

Life Group Notes

Theme: Following Jesus Week 5: How can I be transformed?

In the fifth session in our series on questions about the Christian faith, we are looking today at how we can be transformed as we follow Jesus.



** The inner segments show ways in which God transforms us, and the outer segments show the gifts God gives to help us be transformed. **Our transformation is a work of God, that he invites us to participate in.**

Introductory Question: Where have you noticed God at work most recently, bringing transformation in your life?

- **Heart** (*defined here as emotion, desires, attitudes, worship*)
- **Mind** (*defined here as beliefs, thinking, values, priorities, understanding of the world*)
- **Future** (*our actual future, as well as our hope, trust and thoughts about the future*).
- **Relationships** (*Those in any area of life*)
- **Purpose** (*defined here as knowledge of God's will, and understanding of our purpose*)

Read Matt 6:9-13

Jesus' seemingly simple prayer is a powerful tool for the transformation of those who pray it, and for wider society too.

1. Heart - *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name (Matthew 6:9)*

We live in a world which has 'heart problems', where people (including us) are tempted to worship many things other than God, and to set our hearts on things of this world. We are given **Worship** and **Stillness** as gifts to help us be transformed by God. Worship brings us with thankfulness into the presence of the one true God, and it is in stillness we become aware of our own hearts, and can hear God speak.

- a. **As you sit here today, what tensions, tendencies and temptations are you aware of in your heart?**
- b. **How do worship and stillness help you establish a good foundation in your and help you counter these tendencies?**
- c. **How/where/when do you cultivate meaningful times of stillness?**

2. Mind - *"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*
(Matthew 6:10)

At its core, the battle for our minds is a battle of discipleship. In Rom 12:1-2 we read that the world is seeking to conform us to its own image, and that Jesus calls us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

We are given **God's Word** and his **Spirit** as gifts to help us be transformed by God.

- a. **What shapes your attitudes, thinking, beliefs and values?**
- b. **How is your engagement with God's word shaping and moulding your thinking?**
- c. **When do you experience God's Spirit speaking to you like Jesus promised (John 14:26)?**

3. Future - *"Give us today our daily bread."* **(Matthew 6:11)**

As followers of Jesus we live with hope in Jesus, knowing that our future is secure in him (e.g. 1 Peter 1:3-4). Also, God's present transformation of us now connects directly to our future hope (e.g. 1 John 3:2-3).

God's gifts to us in this area are **Prayer** and **Dependence**. Through prayer we invite God to act, recognising the limits of our ability, and partnering with him in the transformation of our world. Like prayer, dependence is also a radical prophetic act. An attitude of heart which encourages our faith to thrive.

- a. **In what ways are prayer and dependence radical prophetic acts?**
- b. **How are you being transformed through prayer?**
- c. **What is the 'daily bread' that you are actively trusting God for?**
- d. **In what other aspects of life are you cultivating dependence on God?**
- e. **How is it significant for you that Jesus focuses on provision for today?**

4. Relationships - *“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*
(Matthew 6:12)

We have been brought into a global family of God’s people. No longer alone, we are part of something so much bigger than ourselves. How we relate to others is a core part of God’s desired transformation in our lives.

God’s gifts for our transformation in the area of relationships are **Community** and **Solitude**. Both have an important part to play in helping us be shaped and formed by Jesus.

- a. **How do you relate to solitude and community? Which do you more naturally avoid / embrace?**
- b. **How have you been shaped by relationships in the church family (either TWCF or somewhere else)?**
- c. **As you think of your interactions with others, and your times of solitude, how are you being transformed in this season?**

5. Purpose - *“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*
(Matthew 6:13)

We read in Romans 12:2 that the result of having a transformed heart and mind is that we know God’s will, and walk in it. Although we are often surrounded by different opinions and options of how to live, we are called to follow Jesus’ leading, and to resist temptations which lead us from this.

God’s gifts to us in this area are **Service** and **Sabbath**, both of which help us to live according to God’s purpose for our lives.

[The Hebrew word for ‘Sabbath’ is linked to the words for ‘stop’/‘cease’. Sabbath is another radical act - one which involves us declaring our trust and dependence on God, our provider. Sabbath is connected to stopping from working to provide for ourselves, and from the productivity we so rightly encourage at other times. Sabbath need not be a time of stopping from everything, for ‘Sabbath’ can also be used for enjoying relationships, cultivating thankfulness, and celebrating God’s goodness in creative ways.]

- a. **What is your rhythm of serving and sabbath?**
- b. **In a culture where everyone seems to be ‘busy’, are your ‘busy’ times times of serving (or are they just busy)?**
- c. **How do you set aside meaningful times of ‘sabbath’?**
- d. **How is your rhythm of serving and sabbath helping you be transformed by God?**
- e. **What temptations might lead us from ‘serving’ and from ‘sabbath’?**

Application

You may like to ask the group to reflect, and share areas where they are trusting for further transformation in their lives.

You may then like to take time to pray through the Lord's Prayer in Matt 6:9-13, either pausing between sections and leaving silence, or using the sections for active response in the light of what has been shared in the session.

Appendix - For Further Study / reflection / interest

When preparing for this sermon topic, I found it encouraging to observe that Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount also addresses these same areas of transformation, covering each one and highlighting what following him means in practice:

All the verses are from Matthew's Gospel

- **Heart**
 - *Anger (5:21-26)*
 - *Lust (5:27-30)*
 - *Marriage and divorce (5:31-32)*
 - *Love for enemies (5:43-48)*
- **Mind**
 - *Blessed are... (God's priorities) (5:3-12)*
 - *The purpose of the law (5:17-20)*
- **Future**
 - *Giving to the needy & God's rewards (6:1-4)*
 - *Prayer(6:9-14)*
 - *Treasure in God's kingdom (6:19-24)*
 - *Worry (6:25-34)*
 - *Asking and trusting (7:7-11)*
- **Relationships**
 - *Oaths and truth telling (5:33-37)*
 - *Revenge and love (5:38-48)*
 - *Prayer in secret (6:5-8)*
 - *Fasting in Secret (6:16-18)*
 - *Judging others (7:1-6)*
 - *Do to others (7:12)*
- **Purpose**
 - *You are salt and light (5:13-16)*
 - *Enter through the narrow gate (7:13-14)*
 - *True and false. Prophets & disciples (7:15-23)*
 - *Do what Jesus says! (7:24-27)*