



GUIDE FOR GROUP STUDY: the week of March 31st

This study is designed to help your community group grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. There are three dimensions to following Jesus.



UP: growing in relationship with God

IN: growing in relationship with other followers of Jesus

OUT: growing in relationship with the world around us as we join God in God's mission

Get Started:

Describe a time when someone did something incredibly kind for you. How did it make you feel?



UP: Connect with God through Spending Time in His Word

Read aloud the passages for the week: Romans 5:1-10. Allow a few moments to silently reflect on what you heard. Underline or note words or phrases that seem meaningful.

1. Reread verses 3-5. Paul is writing to Christians in Rome who have recently experienced persecution. The Roman government had expelled all of the Jews and Jewish Christians from the city and they had returned not long before Paul wrote this letter. What do you think about Paul's words to them in these verses? How does this serve as an encouragement?
2. Have you ever experienced this chain reaction (*suffering* → *perseverance* → *character* → *hope*) in your life? If so, can you describe the experience? If not, where did this break down?
3. Reread verse 8. God doesn't ask us to change before he extends grace to us. Jesus died for us when we were still sinners so that we might be reconciled to God. What is your initial reaction to hearing that his sacrifice was not dependent on any action on our part?
4. How does this passage inform our understanding of what Christ accomplished on the cross?
5. Once again, this week we are focused on a theologically rich passage, but what are some of the practical implications for us in this passage?



Out: : Connect with the World Around Us (Join God in His Mission)

A couple of weeks ago we named people who we intend to invite to one of the Easter worship services (if you didn't do this as a group, take time to do it now). How is the process of inviting this person going? Pray now for each of the names brought up around the circle.



IN: Connect with Each Other

Close your group by using this prayer as a guide. Have one person lead the prayer, and invite your group to pray silently during each pause.

We thank you, O God, that you have given us an enduring hope; one which cannot disappoint us or mislead us. We thank you, that through our faith in you and in your Son Jesus Christ, you enter into every believing heart and make new the lives that have been torn asunder by the darkness of this world...

(briefly pause for silent prayer)

We pray today O God that we may know that salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Help our fellow Christians, and us, to lay aside the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light that you bestow upon those who actively seek you day by day. Grant that their faith and ours may be fully alive....

(briefly pause for silent prayer)

We ask today, O God, for those who have lost hope and for those who have never had it. Grant to us and to those we lift before you in our hearts a new and abiding vision of what have you have done, and what you are doing, and what you will do, to save and redeem your people and indeed the creation itself. Grant, O God, that all might see and believe and discover their purpose and the purpose of all that is and all that is yet to be....

(pause for silent prayer)

We ask all this of you, O God, knowing that you are our hope and our salvation, a very present help in times of trouble, and the one whose purpose is to grant and new and abundant life to us and our world.

Praise be to your name.

Amen.¹

¹Adapted from Richard J. Fairchild's prayer of intercession which can be viewed here:
<https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/10/prayers-of-people-enduring-hope.html>.