



ALPHA WEEKEND PLANNING & PREP

The typical Alpha Weekend runs from Friday night to Sunday morning. This creates unhurried time and space to watch all the talks about the Holy Spirit, for waiting on God and praying together, and for people to relax and have fun.

For some groups getting away for a whole weekend is not possible. Sometimes people can only do the Friday night, and all day Saturday, or even just the one full day. It does take some planning but it's worth it.

Why do the Alpha Weekend?

- It gives guests the space, time, and atmosphere needed to thoroughly process and reflect on what they are learning.
- It helps guests, hosts, and helpers get to know each other better and form lasting relationships. 3-4 of the teachings are given during the weekend (25% of the Alpha material).
- It provides an experience for guests to ask to be prayed for and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- It's an opportunity to let God bless and encourage guests and leaders.

Tip #1: Go to a house, cabin, retreat centre nearby – just somewhere different from the usual meeting space.

Tip #2: Watch the Prayer Ministry video with your whole team before the Alpha Weekend so they feel prepared.

The Alpha Weekend is all about getting away from the busyness of everyday life so people can connect with each other and connect with God. It's the part of Alpha that many people say was the turning point in their Alpha experience. We consistently see hearts more open to Jesus and lives changed. And that's why we do it.

SAMPLE ALPHA WEEKEND SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

- 6:00 pm – Arrive
- 7:00 pm – Dinner or Snacks
- 8:00 pm – Introduction / Icebreaker Game
- 9:00 pm – Show Intro to the Alpha Weekend video*

*For the Alpha Film Series & Alpha with Nicky Gumbel only.

SATURDAY

- 8:30 am – Breakfast
- 9:00 am – Leaders' Meeting
- 9:30 am – Weekend Talk #1: Who is the Holy Spirit?
- 10:00 am – Refreshments and Snacks
- 10:30 am – Weekend Talk #2: What does the Holy Spirit Do?
- 11:00 am – Small Group Discussion
- 12:00 pm – Lunch
- 2:00 pm – Free time (activities can be organized)
- 4:00 pm – Snacks, coffee, and tea
- 5:00 pm – Worship & Weekend Talk #3: How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?
- 5:30 pm – Prayer Ministry Time
- 6:30 pm – Dinner
- 8:00 pm – Free time

SUNDAY

- 9:00 am – Breakfast
- 9:30 am – Leaders' Meeting
- 10:00 am – Small Group Discussion
- 11:00 am – Weekend Talk #4: How can I make the most of the rest my life? (AFS/ANG)
- 11:30 am – Prayer Ministry Time
- 12:00 pm – Lunch and Depart

*Your schedule may change depending on your Alpha material and number of talks you have on the weekend.

ALPHA WEEKEND CHECKLIST

CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LEADER TO DECIDE

Timing - Will you do an overnight Alpha Weekend or an Alpha Day?
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Dates - When will you do your Alpha Weekend/Day?
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Number of Talks - How many Alpha talks will you cover (2-4)?
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Location - Which venue accommodates structured and leisure time?
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Food - What are you going to eat? Who will prepare the food?
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Transportation - How will everyone get there?
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Cost - How will we pay for this? Will the church subsidize or take an offering?
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Insurance/Liability - Are there forms or contracts required in advance?
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CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LEADER TO DELEGATE

Team - Do you need an Alpha Weekend planning team to help prepare?
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Promotion - How will you promote and confirm sign-ups from guests?
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Fun - What else can you do to make the time memorable and fun?
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Leaders - Do you have people designated for the prayer ministry time?
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Prayer - Do you have people praying throughout this entire event?
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Atmosphere - What can you do to make the space inviting and comfortable?
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Supplies - Do you need to bring any supplies (e.g., TV, projector, speakers, games, etc)?
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Handouts - What materials do you need to prepare in advance to bring along?
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Childcare - Do you need to provide this? Communicate about it to guests ahead of time.
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Possible items to bring:
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- Alpha resources (Alpha videos, handouts, etc.)
- Bibles
- First Aid Kit
- Sound system (projector, computer, cables etc.)
- Name tags
- Pens/pencils
- Games and prizes
- Tissue
- Sports equipment
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____





PRAYER ON ALPHA

Here are 4 places we talk about prayer on Alpha:

1

Prayer during the first few sessions

Depending on what Alpha series you are watching, there may be a short prayer led by one of the presenters at the end of the talk. This is intended to give guests a chance to pray along silently if they want to.

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2

Session 5 is all about prayer

Small groups are encouraged to discuss the topic and then try praying together at the end. Group hosts might simply say a short prayer or give guests an opportunity to pray out loud. In the following weeks hosts can choose to end all small group sessions with prayer.

Note: On Alpha we recommend that you do NOT pray before meals or during small group time until Week 5. This allows the topic of prayer to be introduced thoughtfully and discussed thoroughly in small groups.

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3

Praying for others on the Alpha Weekend/Day

The Alpha Weekend is usually scheduled about halfway through your Alpha. It's a chance to get away from the

Prayer is an essential part of the Alpha guest experience and it's introduced gradually through four specific moments.

busyness of our lives, where people can take time to relax, think, have fun together, learn more about God, and if they're willing, to experience prayer ministry.

The Alpha talks on the weekend are primarily about the Holy Spirit - who, why, how the Spirit helps us stay focused on Jesus and in relationship with Him. After the last session, there's time for guests to pray and be prayed for by a host or helper. We want to give them an opportunity to experience God's love through the Holy Spirit.

There are Leader Training videos in Alpha Builder about prayer to help explain this more.

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4

Prayer and healing

After the Alpha talk about healing, we encourage small groups to discuss the topic and pray for healing. It's often in those prayer times that God surprises us by what he does in people's hearts and in their bodies. Praying for others can be a bit nerve-wracking but if we have even mustard-seed faith, God will show up. God loves to reveal Himself to those who sincerely seek Him .

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PRAYING FOR OTHERS

The word ministry, simply put, means service. So when we talk about prayer ministry, we are talking about serving people through prayer. If you're planning to have someone else lead this time, be sure to coach them through it and have them watch the Team Training video on Prayer Ministry.

After the talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit, groups are encouraged to wait on God, and ask Him to fill them with His Holy Spirit. Since all groups and contexts are unique, there isn't a perfect formula or exact model to do this, but **here are three helpful tips for you:**

1

Invite them into a relationship with Jesus

Outline what will happen in the next while so they know what to expect. Tell them that you'll watch the Alpha talk, and instead of discussion time, you'll have a time of prayer. Explain that being filled with the Holy Spirit is a gift from God for His followers and then, before a time of prayer, invite people to start a relationship with God. Make sure they know it's optional. Pray a simple prayer of commitment and allow time for them to give their lives to Jesus.

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2

Wait on God

Start with a prayer for everyone in the room, and invite guests to pray on their own. A simple prayer you could pray is, "Come, Holy Spirit and fill our hearts" or something similar. Then just wait on God - and this can be the hard part. Wait for minutes, not just a few seconds. It's amazing how long a minute of silence actually feels - and as you're waiting, encourage guests to be open to what God might want to do and to be patient.

Note: Some groups want to have music playing in the background during prayer time, others prefer to have silence. The important thing is that people would be able to focus on God and not get distracted. You might want to encourage people to stand in silence and hold their hands out as if they're about to receive a gift.

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3

Invite hosts & helpers to pray for guests

After some time waiting on God, invite your Alpha hosts and helpers to begin praying with people from their small group. Before you do this, explain to the group what will happen - that hosts and helpers will come around and ask them if they would like prayer, and tell them they can just say 'no thanks' if they prefer not to be prayed for.

Prayer time can take anywhere from 15 minutes to over an hour. After a while, as hosts and helpers are praying for guests, it's great to have someone lead in songs of worship.

This time of prayer ministry needs intentional leadership. It takes a bit of preparation, but it is amazing to see all the things God will do. All of this is shaped by a confidence in God and His desire to pour His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

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