

4 WEEKS

# GOD WITH US





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## week 1

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking it off:

On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you think and live like God is always with you?

#### Big Idea:

We may enjoy God on the mountaintops, but we get to know Him intimately in the valleys.

#### Key Scriptures:

Pg. 5

#### Discussion:

Read the Scripture verses and discuss the following:

1. God is with you. How can you draw near to Him during this season?
2. Read Psalm 139:7-10. What thoughts do these verses stir in you?
3. What have you learned about God in a valley?
4. When was the last time you slowed down and pursued God's presence in a particular moment? What happened? How could you do this more often?

5. Talk about a difficult area in your life where you especially need to keep your mind fixed on God. How will you do it?
6. What you think about matters. What is some thinking you want to change?

#### Wrapping It Up:

Identify a specific way that you can be reminded that God is with you in a particular area. Then commit to that daily for this entire week.

#### memory verse:



*"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"*

**Matthew 1:23 NLT**



## Matthew 1:23 NLT

*“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’”*

## Psalm 84:5-7

*“Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.”*

## Psalm 84:5 NLT

*“What joy for those whose strength comes from the LORD, who have set their minds on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.”*

## Psalm 139:7-10

*“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”*

## week 2

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking it off:

Share about your most exciting wilderness adventure. What difficulties did you face?

#### Big Idea:

Your deepest need becomes a gift when it drives you to depend on God.

#### Key Scriptures:

Pg. 7

#### Discussion:

Read the Scripture verses and discuss the following:

1. Re-read the story of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:3-12 (after God demonstrated His power through Elijah with a victory over the 450 prophets of Baal) What do you think God is trying to communicate to Elijah? To us?
2. How did God communicate to Elijah? How about you? How can you adjust your life to hear from Him?
3. Pastor Jeff said, "Your deepest need becomes a gift when it drives you to depend on God." Have you experienced this gift? Would you share your story?

4. What are some ways you've encountered God's presence in the past? What can you do to discover God's provision and rest during this time in your life?

#### Wrapping It Up:

Pray together: God, we get to know You. Thank You for that. Thank You for speaking to us in Your still, small, voice. Teach us to find rest and provision in Your presence. Teach us to hear Your voice. Thank You for coming near to us as we draw near to You. Amen.

#### memory verse:



*"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast."*

**Psalm 139:7-10**



**Matthew 1:23 NLT**

*“Look! The virgin  
will conceive a  
child! She will give  
birth to a son, and they  
will call him Immanuel, which  
means, ‘God is with us.’”*

**1 Kings 19:3-12** *“Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. “I have had enough, Lord,” he said. “Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors. All at once an angel touched him and said, “Get up and eat.” He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again. The angel of the Lord came back a second time and touched him and said, “Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you.” So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. There he went into a cave and spent the night. And the word of the Lord came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah? He replied, “I have been very zealous for the Lord God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” The Lord said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper.”*

**Psalms 34:18** *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.”*

**Psalms 139:7-10** *“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.”*

## *week 3*

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### **Kicking it off:**

What's your favorite kind of weather? What's your least favorite? Why?

#### **Big Idea:**

Never let the presence of a storm cause you to doubt the presence of God.

#### **Key Scriptures:**

Pg. 9

#### **Discussion:**

Read the Scripture verses and discuss the following:

1. What would you consider the roughest waters you've ever had to navigate through? In your experience, did God calm the storm or calm you in the storm? Explain.
2. How has that experience changed the way you relate with God?
3. What did you learn from that storm that God can use to help someone else through their own storm?
4. Read 2 Timothy 4:16-17. What can you learn from Paul's words to Timothy?

5. Do you need to forgive yourself or others for causing a storm? What step can you take toward forgiveness?
6. Pastor Jeff said, "Peace isn't the found in the absence of a storm. Peace is found in the presence of a good God." What are some ways you try to find false peace? How will you seek God's presence instead?

#### **Wrapping It Up:**

Who do you know who is going through a storm? How can you show them God's love this week?

#### *memory verse:*



*"I know the Lord is always  
with me. I will not be  
shaken, for he is right  
beside me."*

**Psalm 16:8 NLT**





## Matthew 1:23 NLT

*"Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"*

## Acts 27:20-25

*"When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved. After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me, and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.'" So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."*

## 2 Timothy 4:16-17

*"... everyone deserted me ... But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength ..."*

## Psalms 16:8 NLT

*"I know the Lord is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me."*

## Psalms 46:1-3 GNT

*"God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths; even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence."*

## week 4

### SMALL GROUP STUDY

#### Kicking it off:

Who do you most look forward to spending time with at Christmas?

#### Big Idea:

God is with us always as we live out His commands.

#### Key Scriptures:

Pg. 11

#### Discussion:

Read the Scripture verses and discuss the following:

1. How did this message change the way you think about the Christmas story?
2. Which part of Jesus' human experience means the most to you?
3. What are you facing that you need Jesus to enter into as Immanuel?
4. Jesus went through a lot to be with you. What have you done, or what do you want to do to make room for Him?
5. Read Matthew 28:19-20. How will you respond to His command this next year? How have you seen Jesus follow through on His promise that

in your going and fulfilling His Great Commandment, He will be with you always?

#### Wrapping It Up:

Pray: God, thank You for sending Jesus to be with us, to give up everything for us. Thank You for raising Him back to life. Thank You giving us real and full life through Him. Thank You for sending Your Holy Spirit to be in us. We ask You to bring the reality and presence of Jesus into our thinking, our praying, our decisions, and each area of our lives this next year. We pray this by the power of Jesus' name. Amen.

#### memory verse:



*"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**Matthew 28:19-20**

**Matthew 1:18-23 NLT**

*"This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God with us.'"*

**John 1:1, 14** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. ..."*

**John 14:15-19** *"If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live."*

**Matthew 28:19-20** *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**Matthew 1:21-23 NLT** *"And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God with us.'"*

*"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*

*John 1:14*





# Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
  - Take time to prepare.
  - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
  - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
  - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
  - What is the purpose of our group?
  - What is the vision for our group?
  - What are your expectations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
  - What are some things we value as a group?
  - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
  - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
  - Encouraging and challenging one another
  - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?



# Group Agreement

## OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUR VALUES

**Group Attendance:** To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

**Safe Environment:** To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

**Respect Differences:** To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

**Confidentiality:** To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

**Encouragement for Growth:** To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

**Welcome for Newcomers:** To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

**Shared Ownership:** To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

**Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes:** To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_
- Childcare \_\_\_\_\_
- When we will meet (day of week) \_\_\_\_\_
- Where we will meet (place) \_\_\_\_\_
- We will begin at (time) \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of this agreement \_\_\_\_\_
- Date we will review this agreement again \_\_\_\_\_
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study \_\_\_\_\_



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