

## **Caring for One Another**

These four lessons require the Discipleship Group to buy the book *Caring for One Another* by Edward T. Welch. In his book, Welch covers eight ways to cultivate meaningful relationships. This material is very practical and will enhance how you live the Christian life in the local church.

## **Caring for One Another**

### **TRUTH**

Read the Preface and Chapters 1-2 of *Caring for One Another* by Ed Welch and take notes here on the main points of the chapters.



## **EQUIPPING**

### *Chapter One: With All Humility*

“Imagine—an interconnected group of people who entrust themselves to each other. You can speak of your pain, and someone responds with compassion and prayer. You can speak of your joys, and someone shares in them with you. You can even ask for help with sinful struggles, and someone prays with you, offers hope and encouragement from Scripture...” (11).

Have you ever asked another person to pray for you? How did it go?

Practice making a connection between your needs and God’s promises. If possible, identify specific Scripture, but that isn’t necessary to begin. You could practice with your own needs or use scenarios such as these:

- Health concerns
- Financial fears
- Relationship difficulties

How do you hope to grow in being needy? Who might you ask to pray for you?

Take time to pray together.

*Chapter Two: Moving toward Others*

“All the biblical stories of the Lord moving toward people are stories of grace” (18).

Have you ever been pursued by someone who took a genuine interest in your life? How did that person do it? How was it encouraging to you?

We hope to be motivated by how Jesus has treated us. How would you say that Jesus has pursued you?

Why might you be reluctant to move toward others?

How do you hope to make the first move today and this week?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Share why you are reluctant to move toward others or to allow others to move toward others. How do you plan on breaking out of such reluctance?

## **MISSION**

How can humility and moving toward others serve as a bridge for reaching those outside the body of Christ?

Who are the three people (non-church, non-believers) you are praying for?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Steps I have taken or will take to connect with them:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

How can this lesson fuel your prayer for those on your prayer-tags?

## **SUPPLICATION**

Share your prayer requests with one another. Space is provided below to write them down. Use this to help remind you what to pray for each other during the week. In addition, there are a few questions to help you share requests.

What are your prayer requests regarding the truth this week?

In light of the discussion this week, what do you need to pray for?

What are your prayer requests regarding any situations in your life this week?

Prayer requests from others in the group this week

## TRUTH

Read Chapters 3-4 of *Caring for One Another* by Ed Welch and take notes here on the main points of the chapters.





## EQUIPPING

### *Chapter Three: Know the Heart*

“Know the heart, know the person. Our interest in helping one another pushes us beyond routine conversations and into the realm of the heart” (23).

Review the diagram on page 29.

How does this self-understanding make sense of your own soul?

What questions help you make your way into your own heart? Be prepared to share your answers with your small group.

We want to practice on ourselves and grow in transparency before the Lord. As we grow in understanding of how our heart works, we can learn to move more deeply into someone else’s life.

What do you love? This asks about the objects of your desire.

What makes you happy? This listens for desires satisfied.

What makes you sad? This asks about desires postponed or denied.

What makes you angry? This, too, asks about desires denied.

What do you fear? This asks about desires at risk.

Practice seeing the good.

In the past week, what good things have you seen in other people?

Why is seeing the good important?

#### *Chapter Four: Know the Critical Influences*

“Our hearts are always up to something. We love, fret, plan, rest, avoid, worship, hide, and much more” (33).

Endless influences shape our lives: people, bodies and brains, education, climate, local culture, political leaders, race, and wars. What has been the prominent influences on your life? How has it affected your heart?

Our era has been more careful in describing brain-related differences. Which one has been helpful for how you have understood yourself or others? How has knowing the particulars about someone’s physical weaknesses contributed to your patience and love for that person?

Read Psalm 130:1-4. Whatever the psalmist’s circumstances, they are extreme. The psalmist describes an experience that could not be closer to death while still having a life. But he directs his pleas to the Lord. He remembers this: if the Lord, in his loving-kindness, forgives his enemies, then we can be assured that he will be with us during our time of need.

We do not deny the hardships of life. Rather, we want to speak them to God who hears, remember his promises and faithful love, and grow in trusting him.

Give an example of a difficult circumstance you have experienced. How did it reveal influences in your life?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

What are the negative influences in your life that impact how your heart responds to difficult circumstances?

How would you rather want to respond to difficult circumstances?

## **MISSION**

How can knowing the heart and its influences of others serve as a bridge for reaching those outside the body of Christ?

Who are the three people (non-church, non-believers) you are praying for?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

Steps I have taken or will take to connect with them:

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Prayer requests from others in the group this week

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## **EQUIPPING**

### *Chapter Five: Be personal and Pray*

“Though we might think that real help comes through dramatic and new insights, most help tends to come in more ordinary ways. It comes through our personal engagement with each other, our attention to Christ, and prayer” (43).

When have you been blessed by the personal responses of others? In other words, when has someone encouraged you by really listening to and hearing from you?

The movement from knowing others to praying with them face-to-face can be hard. Why might this be? How do you hope to grow in praying with others?

Take some time to pray with each other.

*Chapter Six: Talk about Suffering*

“Hardships are unique...Hardships share something in common. They are painful and can leave us feeling at the end of ourselves.” (52).

Have any particular Scripture passages about suffering become especially meaningful to you?

How do you respond to questions 2 and 3 on pages 57-58?



## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Why are we reluctant to see the gospel at work in the midst of suffering?

## **MISSION**

How can addressing the suffering of others serve as a bridge for reaching those outside the body of Christ?

Who are the three people (non-church, non-believers) you are praying for?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

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## **EQUIPPING**

### *Chapter Seven: Talk about Sin*

“Wise conversations will talk about sin. Though we might prefer to avoid this, we know that we all struggle with sin, and we all need each other’s help. As with suffering, we offer that help very carefully” (59).

Since we are saints who sin, how can we talk about those who might be caught in it?

### **See the good**

We talk about the hard things and good things before we talk about the bad. For example, read 1 Corinthians 1:4-7.

### **We all Sin**

In Christ, we live in a relationship with God that is condemnation free and full of forgiveness, but it is not sin-free. So we talk about sin “with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2). “Our goal is to contribute to a community in which it is increasingly natural to talk about sin and ask each other for help” (61).

1 John 1:8-9

### **Ways to Talk about Sin**

“We” more than “You.”

Questions more than Exhortations

Sin is personal

End Confessions with “Thank You”

Has anyone ever spoken to you about your sin in a helpful way? How did he or she do that? Has anyone ever spoken to you about your sin in a way that was unhelpful? Why was it unhelpful?

## *Chapter Eight: Remember and Reflect*

“Caring for One Another has identified ordinary features of person-to-person engagement. There is nothing new here. The purpose has been to remember and live out applications of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But in that, the very power of God is further on display, and the church is strengthened and drawn together ” (67).

“As we grow in spiritual care for one another, we will indeed hear of human struggles that are more intense and more complicated than we thought possible, and we might feel like an inept child more than a dependent one. We will hear about matters of life and death, and when we do, we will be moved by what we hear, we will pray with and pray for, we will seek help” (70).

What stands out in your own summary of these eight lessons?

What has been different in your conversations as a result of doing this study?

Humility seeks help. Can you imagine how a confusing conversation with another person could lead naturally to the two of you seeking more help? When would you do that?

What's next? What would help you to grow in these wise and helpful conversations? How do you aspire to grow as a child of God?

## **ACCOUNTABILITY**

What steps will you take to care for others that you want your group to keep you accountable?

## **MISSION**

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Prayer requests from others in the group this week