



Daily Devotion

How to Engage your Group in Daily Devotions

The Center for Bible Engagement (Cole 2009) did a study that found that only 25% of Christians claim to regularly study the Bible for direction in their lives. This study shows that Christians who engage with God's word more than four times per week see a dramatic change in their lives. Christians who engage with the Bible 3 or less times per week have very little difference in their lifestyles than those who are non-believers. This is a sad fact. What if our Life Group could help to change that statistic by making it a goal to support each group member in their daily devotions? That may sound easy, but it is harder than we think! Remember, we have an enemy that will do almost anything to keep us from regularly engaging in God's Word. Here are some ideas to help your group engage more in their daily devotions.

For groups that have been through Rooted and Shapes of Rooted, you have been introduced to the importance of daily devotions and sharing what you have read and thought with your group. In Shapes of Rooted you were introduced to the SOAP method of Bible study, which encourages you to read daily and pick a single verse to focus on for that day. This helps to focus your attention on one idea, which helps us to be clearer about what God might be saying to us for that day. You then write an observation, application and prayer. This simple method gives everyone something to talk about as the group gathers. Even if you only share the verse that you picked, you have been encouraged to engage in God's word, and you have encouraged your group as well.

If you carve out some time in your group meeting each week for people to share from their daily devotions, you give them an opportunity to share what God is doing in their lives and you can give each of your group members needed accountability to be engaging in God's word multiple times a week.

Below are some further tools that can help your group to engage more deeply in God's word together:

Bible Reading Plans: A plan can be very helpful to guide you on what to read each day. The Bible is a compilation of 66 books written over a 1500 year period. It is not really designed to be read from beginning to end (although you certainly can do that!). Here are some suggested reading plans, with options to help everyone from the beginner to those who have read the Bible often. Choose the "speed" that works for you!

Crawl: Find a plan that gives you one single verse for each day. You can use a daily calendar or consider the YouVersion App. It has a “verse of the day” on the home page. Read it and think about it, and share with your group what it meant to you.

Walk: The YouVersion App also has some short reading plans that are centered around a certain topic. Pick a topic and read through that plan, again, noting what sticks out to you and sharing it with your group when you meet.

Run: The YouVersion App has a First Steps Reading Plan or a Life Journal Reading Plan, which will take you through the entire Bible in a year. First Steps covers all the New Testament and all books of the Old Testament (but not every chapter of every OT book). It is usually about a page and a half of reading a day, and a good place to start, if this is new to you. The Life Journal Plan will take you through the entire Bible in a year, reading about 5 chapters per day. It is very helpful to pick a single verse to focus on each day, especially when you are reading multiple pages of scripture. This focus will help you share thoughts with your group when you meet. It is also good to write those thoughts down. We have Life Journals available at the Next Steps Kiosk that work very well for this. See below for more information about the Life Journal.

Bible Study Tools: Sometimes you will have questions, or want to find out more information about a certain text or idea. Bible Study tools can help. First, you might want to consider purchasing a good study Bible (be sure it is in a readable translation like NIV or NLT). Below are some websites that offer other tools.

Biblegateway.com – This offers many translations so you can compare the wording of the many translations. Remember we are working with ancient texts, and there are some slight variations in how they are translated, usually more to make it understandable to our own culture.

Blueletterbible.org – (Phone app also). This provides searches, translation comparisons, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, and an interlinear Bible (shows Hebrew or Greek alongside English, which allows you to study the meaning of the original words).

Life Journals – We have Life Journals available for purchase at the Next Steps Kiosk. These include a description of the SOAP method of Bible study, which is very helpful to use in your group. It also includes the two reading plans referenced above, and journal pages to write your verses and thoughts.

Here are some other great websites for reference, especially if you “Google” your questions. You want to be careful that the answer you receive comes from a reliable source! “Many advisors bring success (Proverbs 15:22, NLT)! Biblehub.com, Biblestudytools.com, Billygraham.org, Desiringgod.org, StudyLight.org, and Bible.org.