

Extended Sharing Time

Small Group #7

Perspective on the Bible study:

As always, share from your heart/life. There are SO many places in this lesson you can be vulnerable and lead the way! This lesson can be powerful, but you will have to help set the pace with sharing from your heart. You can use all the suggested questions below . . . or some of them . . . or supplement them with a question or two of your own.

Explaining to your group:

At this point, we are half way through the semester -- and if you think about it, our group has certainly grown and changed over the past 6 weeks! I thought this might be a good time to reflect some on our own spiritual journeys since we've been in college. So this week we're going to take a break from the "diagram" and discussions on salvation/sin and reflect back on all God has done!

There are several benefits from doing something like this:

1) God, throughout the Bible, is constantly rebuking his people for forgetting all he has done. In fact, he regularly instructs them to build things (like piles of rocks!) to remember His faithfulness. Sometimes we're too busy to reflect on all God HAS done. (Joshua 4:1-7)

2) Sharing about our lives helps us to learn from each other's progress and struggles. We are a private culture. We perfect polishing the outside, but very few people have true friends – people who know them. Sharing even small pieces of our lives helps us learn from each other. (Rom 15:1-7)

3) Sharing about our journeys allows others to encourage us and helps us. The Christian life is not meant to be lived with millions of "Lone Rangers" but rather in a community that bears with each other and encourages one another. (Heb 10:24-25)

EXPLORE

So here's the plan for tonight. I'm going to throw out 5-6 questions to help guide our sharing. You don't have to answer all of them . . . or *any* of them if you don't want to. They are designed to get us talking about our lives over the past 6 weeks. Hopefully everyone will chip in as they want and we'll have a rich time together.

Questions for Sharing Time:

1. All of us came to college from different backgrounds, at different places in our spiritual journey. **As you look at how your relationship with God has changed over the past 6 weeks, is there one particular change or "step forward" that stands out as particularly meaningful or significant to you?** Or, finish this statement: *I think the most significant spiritual change that has occurred in my life since I've been at college is . . .*

Try to be specific. Don't say something like, "I really like this book I'm reading." But, share something like: "The most significant change in my spiritual life since I've been in college occurred one midnight, talking to Sam. He was telling me about what Christ meant to him and I realized, 'I have never thought about it that way.' I've been thinking about it ever since."

Tell us about "steps forward" in your spiritual journey.

2. Is there a relationship(s) that God has blessed you with . . . someone (or a group of someones) who has helped point you closer to Christ or encouraged you? How have they done this? (be specific as possible)

3. Has there been a time when God seemed especially near . . . like you knew he was there for you? Tell us about it.

4. Has there been a time when God seemed especially far off . . . or a struggle that was/is painful? Tell us about it.

5. Tell us about something you've learned that has really changed your view of Christ/God.

6. Finish this statement, "God: Looking back on these few weeks I would like to publicly thank you for" (it would be good if most/all people chipped in on this question)

Application

Ask 2-3 of the more mature group members to end the group in prayer, thanking God for specific things shared and perhaps praying for particular needs raised.

Close with something visionary like "My dream is that this group will get so much closer over the next 6 weeks than we have thus far – that we'll feel free to share our struggles and journeys . . . that we'll laugh together, seek God together, grow together." Maybe tell them how much you've learned from them and enjoy them.