

Life Group Leaders' Guide: God's Plan for Our Homes and Families

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by thanking God for bringing your group together and ask the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion about building godly homes and belonging.

Worship Song Suggestions (10 minutes)

"Cornerstone" – Hillsong Worship

"The Blessing" – Kari Jobe, Cody Carnes, Elevation Worship

"Goodness of God" – Bethel Music / Jenn Johnson

"Build My Life" – Pat Barrett / Housefires

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: Share about a time when you first felt like you truly "belonged" somewhere, whether in a home, church, or community. What made that place feel like home rather than just a building?

Key Scripture Passages

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone." — Ephesians 2:19–20

Key Takeaways (5 minutes)

1. A Godly Home is Built on Belonging

Everyone needs to know they have a place where they are loved and valued

2. A Godly Home is Built on Christ

Jesus is the foundation that holds families together through every storm

3. A Godly Home is Built Together

Every family member has a role in creating a healthy home

4. A Godly Home is Filled with God's Presence

God's ultimate goal is to dwell with us in our homes

Discussion Questions

Section 1: Understanding Belonging (15 minutes)

1. Pastor Talo mentioned that Paul wrote encouraging words from prison despite terrible circumstances. What does this teach us about where our encouragement and strength should come from?
2. **Read Ephesians 2:19-22 together.** What does it mean that we are "no longer foreigners and strangers"? How does this change our identity?
3. In Pastor Talo's sermon, he stated: "The church doesn't start here. The church starts in your house." How does this perspective challenge the way we typically think about church?
4. Are there people in your household who might feel like "strangers or foreigners" rather than truly belonging? What might be contributing to that?

Section 2: Building on the Right Foundation (15 minutes)

5. Pastor Talo shared that many homes are built on the wrong foundations, such as money, success, or comfort. What are some signs that a family might be building on the wrong foundation?
6. **Personal Reflection:** What foundation was your family of origin built on? How has that affected you today?
7. Pastor Talo said, "When you get all the money gone, your savings are gone, the fame that you seek, your health is failing... none of the things that you build on will sustain you." Why is Christ the only foundation that holds during life's storms?
8. **Practical Question:** What would it look like practically to "put Christ back in the center of everything you do" in your home this week?

Section 3: Creating a Healthy Home Environment (15 minutes)

9. In Pastor Talo's sermon, he mentioned that "belonging must be practiced in our homes" and described godly homes as places where:
 - Forgiveness flows freely
 - Conversations are safe
 - Mistakes don't remove love
 - Encouragement is spoken often

Which of these is strongest in your home? Which needs the most work?

10. Pastor Talo shared about "passionate discussions" with his wife. How can couples (and families) disagree in healthy ways that still demonstrate belonging and respect?

11. **For Parents:** The message emphasized that parents preach the message at home throughout the week, not just pastors on Sunday. How does this responsibility feel? What support do you need?
12. **For Everyone:** Pastor Talo said, "You are the change maker. You cannot allow outside to influence a change in God's house." What outside influences are trying to shape your family values, and how can you resist them?

Section 4: Building Together (10 minutes)

13. Paul used the metaphor of stones being joined together to build something strong. In your family, how does each person contribute to building a healthy home? Are there any "pukas" (holes) where someone isn't in their right place?
 14. Pastor Talo mentions that children watch how parents treat each other. What are some ways your family relationships are modeling Christ to those watching?
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Personal Reflection (5 minutes)

Let's take a moment of silence for each person to consider:

- Is my home currently a "house" or a "home", just a structure, or a place filled with life, belonging, and God's presence?
 - What is one specific change I need to make this week?
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Practical Applications for This Week

Choose 1-2 of these to commit to this week:

For Individuals:

- **Daily Prayer:** Pray specifically for each family member by name this week, asking God to help them feel they belong
- **Speak Life:** Make it a goal to give at least three genuine encouragements to family members each day
- **Forgive Quickly:** If there's unresolved conflict in your home, take steps toward reconciliation this week

For Couples:

- **Date Night Discussion:** Have a conversation about what foundation your marriage is built on. Is Christ truly the cornerstone?
- **Appreciation Exercise:** Share three things you appreciate about your spouse and why they matter to you
- **Prayer Together:** Commit to praying together at least 3 times this week, even if just for 2-3 minutes

For Families:

- **Family Meeting:** Gather everyone and ask: "Does everyone feel like they belong in our home? What would make our home feel more like a place of belonging?"
- **Scripture Focus:** Post Ephesians 2:19-22 somewhere visible and read it together once a day this week
- **Create Traditions:** Start one new family tradition that builds togetherness (family game night, shared meal, devotional time, etc.)
- **Invite God's Presence:** Begin or end each day with a simple family prayer, acknowledging God's presence in your home

For Small Groups:

- **Accountability Partners:** Pair up and check in mid-week about how you're implementing these changes
 - **Service Project:** Identify a family in your church or community that needs to experience belonging and find a practical way to serve them
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Closing Activity & Prayer Time (10 minutes)

"You Too" Exercise: Following Pastor Talo's instruction, go around the circle. Have each person look at the person next to them and say:

"You too are a stone that God wants to be with. You too belong to God's family."

After everyone has participated, pray for one another, specifically that each person's home would become a place where:

- Belonging is felt by everyone
- Christ is the foundation
- Family members build together
- God's presence is evident

Memory Verse for the Week

"In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit." — Ephesians 2:21–22

Preparation for Next Week

- Journal about changes you notice in your home this week
- Be ready to share one success and one challenge from implementing these principles
- If you're struggling significantly with family relationships, consider reaching out to a pastor or Christian counselor for additional support

Additional Resources

- Book recommendation: "The Meaning of Marriage" by Timothy Keller
- Explore mission opportunities through New Hope's Asia outreach if God is stirring your heart toward the nations

Leader Notes

- **Be sensitive** to the fact that some group members may come from difficult family situations, be single, divorced, or have strained family relationships.
- **Create space** for honest sharing while maintaining hope that God can heal and restore. The principles of belonging, building on Christ, and creating godly community apply to all of us, whatever our family situation.

Additional Discussion Questions to Choose From

How does the concept of 'consequently' in Ephesians 2:19-22 challenge us to view our identity first as children of God rather than through our cultural or ethnic backgrounds?

In what ways can our homes become merely 'houses' rather than places of true belonging, and what practical steps can we take to transform them into spaces where God's presence dwells?

How does the missionary's experience in Myanmar, where the church continued planting despite war and persecution, challenge our understanding of what it means to live faithfully regardless of circumstances?

What does it mean, in practice, to be 'built on Christ' as the cornerstone of our families, especially when facing financial pressures, health challenges, or relational conflicts?

How can parents embrace their role as the primary preachers and teachers in their homes rather than relying solely on Sunday messages to shape their family's spiritual formation?

Why is creating an atmosphere of belonging so critical for children and spouses, and what are the long-term consequences when family members feel like strangers in their own homes?

How does the image of each family member being a unique stone in the building challenge us to value every person's contribution rather than allowing 'puka' or gaps in our family structure?

What foundations other than Christ (such as money, success, or comfort) have we been tempted to build our homes upon, and how can we recognize when these false foundations are failing us?

In what ways does practicing quick forgiveness and speaking encouragement often transform the spiritual atmosphere of a home and model Christ's love to watching children?

How can we invite God's presence more intentionally into the daily rhythms of our homes rather than compartmentalizing faith as something that only happens on Sundays?

5-Day Devotional: Building a Home on Christ

Reflection Questions for the Week:

- In what ways have I been living like a stranger rather than someone who belongs?
 - What false foundations have I been building my life upon instead of Christ?
 - How can I make my home a safer, more welcoming place for my family?
 - Where is God calling me to actively build with others in His household?
 - What practical steps can I take to invite God's presence more fully into my daily home life?
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Day 1: From Strangers to Family

Reading: Ephesians 2:19-22

Devotional:

Paul wrote these encouraging words from a Roman prison, reminding us that our circumstances don't define our identity in Christ. You are no longer a foreigner or stranger—you belong to God's household. This belonging isn't something you earned; it's a gift drawn from God's grace through Jesus Christ.

In a world where people search endlessly for acceptance, the gospel declares you already have a place at the table. Your cultural background, past mistakes, or current struggles don't disqualify you. Through Christ, you are a citizen of God's kingdom and a member of His family. Today, reflect on this truth: you belong. Let this reality shape how you see yourself and how you welcome others into community.

Day 2: The Foundation That Holds

Reading: Matthew 7:24-27

Devotional:

When storms hit your marriage, finances, health, or family, what foundation holds you steady? Many build their lives on money, success, comfort, or achievement—foundations that crumble under pressure. Jesus offers a different way: build your life on His unchanging Word. The wise builder doesn't just hear Christ's teachings but puts them into practice daily.

This isn't about a twenty-minute Sunday experience; it's about applying God's truth throughout the week in your home, workplace, and relationships. When everything else fails—when savings disappear, health declines, or plans fall apart—Christ remains the Rock that never shifts. Today, examine your foundation. Are you building on the solid rock of Jesus or the sinking sand of temporary things?

Day 3: Home as a Place of Belonging

Reading: Psalm 68:5-6

Devotional:

God sets the lonely in families because He understands our deepest need: to belong. Your home should be the first place where belonging is practiced, not just the church building. Children need to know they belong. Spouses need to feel valued and appreciated. Every family member should experience unconditional love despite mistakes and imperfections. Many live like strangers under the same roof; each doing their own thing without true connection.

But God's design is different. He calls us to create atmospheres where forgiveness flows freely, conversations are safe, and encouragement is spoken often. The church doesn't start on Sunday morning; it starts in your daily family life. Today, ask yourself: Does everyone in my home feel they truly belong?

Day 4: Built Together, Not Alone

Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-27

Devotional:

No single stone builds a wall. Every member of God's household has a unique shape and purpose. You might look at yourself and wonder where you fit, but God has designed you perfectly for your place in His building. In your family, each person plays an essential role. In the church, your presence matters; when you're missing, there's a gap only you can fill.

This requires humility to recognize we need each other and intentionality to invest in togetherness. Building together means sharing stories of both victories and struggles, being vulnerable about failures, and celebrating each other's growth. It means parents teaching children at home throughout the week, not depending solely on Sunday messages. Today, consider: How am I actively building with others rather than living isolated?

Day 5: A Dwelling Place for God

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

Devotional:

God's ultimate goal isn't just to build a structure but to create a dwelling place where He lives by His Spirit. Your home can be beautiful; perfect paint, nice furniture, all the comforts—but without God's presence, it's just a house. What transforms a house into a home is the life, laughter, memories, and, most importantly, God's presence that fills it.

When you invite the Holy Spirit into your daily family life, healing comes to wounded hearts, peace replaces chaos, and hope overcomes despair. This happens when Christ is genuinely at the center—not as an add-on, but as the cornerstone determining everything else. A home filled with God's presence becomes a place of refuge, encouragement, and transformation that impacts your community and nation. Today, pray: "Lord, make my home Your dwelling place."