2026-11-04 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: The Lukewarm Church
Overview

This guide is designed to help your group engage deeply with the themes presented in this sermon. The central call is for professing Christians to move beyond comfort and nominal faith into genuine, surrendered discipleship rooted in reading Scripture, prayer, and fasting.

Key Takeaways

1. We are at war on three fronts. The spiritual battle begins in the heart with desire, moves to the mind, and is expressed through physical action. Most people never move past the first front because they have not settled the question of who they truly serve.

2. The three pillars of a growing faith are reading, prayer, and fasting. These three disciplines are not optional extras for the spiritually elite. They are the foundation of a genuine relationship with God. Fasting in particular is largely neglected in modern Christianity, despite being an expected practice throughout Scripture.

3. True repentance is not an apology -- it is a transformation. Repentance involves a change of heart, a change of mind, and a change of direction. It is godly sorrow that results in a complete turning away from sin and toward God, not simply feeling bad and moving on.

4. The modern church can be one of the most dangerous spiritual battlefields. False teaching does not always look extreme. The most dangerous versions are subtle -- shallow gospels, emotional stimulation without substance, and a culture that discourages members from digging into Scripture on their own.

5. Lukewarm Christianity does not just affect the individual -- it affects everyone around them. When believers live without full surrender, they risk

misleading others, causing church hurt, and giving those who are genuinely searching a distorted picture of who God is.

Discussion Questions
Opening

Before this sermon, how would you have defined a lukewarm Christian? Has that definition shifted at all after hearing this message?

The speaker shared that this message was not necessarily aimed at tearing down any one church, but at a widespread pattern he has observed. Have you witnessed or experienced what he describes? How did it affect you?

The Battle and Our Desires

The speaker says the war begins in the heart with desire -- what we truly worship. What are some subtle things that compete for first place in your heart that you might not immediately label as idols?

Matthew 6.24 tells us we cannot serve two masters. In practical, everyday terms, what does choosing to serve God actually look like for you right now? Where is that choice hardest to make?

The Three Pillars: Reading, Prayer, and Fasting

The speaker describes a moment when God put it clearly on his heart: read, pray, and fast. He also admits he was seeking answers everywhere except the Word itself. Can you relate to that tendency? What does it look like in your own life?

Fasting is described as "killing the flesh and feeding the spirit." How familiar is fasting as a regular practice in your life or in the churches you have been part of? What has held you back from making it a habit, or what has made it meaningful when you have practiced it?

The speaker distinguishes between reading Scripture to understand right and

wrong versus reading it to understand and know God personally. How has your own approach to reading the Bible changed over time, or how might it need to change?

Prayer is described as the relational pillar -- the means by which we nurture closeness with God. What is the difference between checking a box with prayer and praying in a way that is genuinely personal and relational? What does that difference look like in your experience?

Repentance

The speaker defines repentance as a complete change of heart, mind, and direction -- not just saying sorry, but being sorry in a way that produces real change. How does this definition challenge or confirm the way you have understood repentance?

He describes his own breaking point as a "tear-soaked, snotty face" moment on the floor of his closet. Have you had a moment of genuine brokenness before God? What came out of it?

The Church and False Teaching

The speaker says the most dangerous false teaching is the most subtle -- gospels that are shallow enough to feel true but lack the call to full surrender. What are some markers you look for to evaluate whether a church or teacher is handling Scripture faithfully?

He references Matthew 7.15-16, Acts 20.29-31, and Jude 1.3-4 to show that attacks on the church come from within, not just from outside. How does your group actively guard against this? What does being on the alert actually look like in community?

The speaker says the church's real job is to plant seeds and water them, but that God provides the growth (1 Corinthians 3.6-7). How does this shape the way you think about evangelism, discipleship, and your role in someone else's spiritual journey?

Lukewarm Kills

The speaker closes with the idea that lukewarm Christianity is not just a personal problem -- it harms the people around us. Can you think of a time when someone else's halfhearted faith or church hurt affected your own walk, or when your own lukewarmness may have affected someone else?

He says he has had to tell people that the Christianity they have seen may not actually represent what Christianity is. How do you navigate that conversation with someone who has been hurt or turned off by the church?

Practical Applications

The following are concrete steps your group can commit to individually and together.

1. Audit your desires. Take time this week to honestly ask yourself: what do I sacrifice the most time, energy, and thought for? Write it down. Bring it before God in prayer and ask Him to reorder your priorities.

2. Establish or renew the three pillars. As a group, commit to a specific, realistic plan for reading Scripture, prayer, and fasting over the next month. Share your plans with one another and follow up. Consider choosing a book of the Bible to read together.

3. Read the Word to know God, not just to know rules. As you read this week, approach the text with the question: what does this reveal about who God is? Keep a short journal of what you discover.

4. Try a fast. If fasting is not part of your regular practice, commit to one intentional fast before the group meets again. It does not have to be lengthy. Pair it with prayer and bring what you experienced back to the group.

5. Examine your repentance. Reflect on an area of your life where you have said sorry to God repeatedly without real change. Ask God to show you what

genuine repentance -- a full turning -- would look like in that area. Share with a trusted person in the group if you are comfortable doing so.

6. Engage the assembly with intention. The speaker points to Hebrews 10.25, Psalm 122.1, and Matthew 18.20 as showing the command, the joy, and the power of assembling together. Come to your next church gathering or small group with a specific expectation of encountering God, not just attending a service.

7. Pray for someone affected by church hurt. Think of one person in your life who has been hurt or driven away by a lukewarm or false expression of Christianity. Commit to praying for them by name this week and ask God to show you whether He is calling you to reach out.

Closing Prayer Focus

Close your group time by praying together over these themes. You may want to pray specifically for:

Genuine surrender in each group member's life
A hunger for the Word, for prayer, and for fasting
Those who have been hurt by the church and are far from God
The courage to speak truth without compromise and without pride
A church culture that makes disciples, not just attenders

"Kill the flesh and feed the spirit." -- The speaker