

Make Room

Connect Group Guide - 9.13.26

Opening Prayer

Key Scripture

- Luke 11:9-13
- Jeremiah 29:13
- Matthew 6:33
- John 14:16-17
- Hebrews 6:1-2
- Matthew 19:13-15
- Acts 13:2-3
- Acts 8:14-17
- 2 Timothy 1:6
- Matthew 7:7-8

Message Recap

This week's message was about creating space for the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. The message explored what it means to truly encounter God, the biblical foundation for practices like laying on of hands, and the importance of approaching God with open hands and a hungry heart.

Key Takeaways

- The Holy Spirit is a person, not a feeling, an experience, or a thing. Jesus called Him the Helper, and He is the third person of the Trinity.
- Encountering God is not about chasing an emotional experience. It is about pursuing God Himself. When we seek the Giver, we become available for whatever He wants to do through us.
- Laying on of hands is a biblical practice used for blessing, commissioning, ministry, and the stirring of spiritual gifts. It is not strange or unusual. It is scriptural.
- God invites us to actively seek Him. Ask, seek, and knock are action words. God invites us to pursue Him.
- Many of us have gifts that we are sitting on. God wants us to steward and use what He has placed inside of us.

- Making room for God means approaching Him with open hands, a posture of availability rather than a list of demands.

Discussion Questions

Opening Questions

1. The message opened by reflecting on significant historical events and how they changed things permanently. Can you think of a moment in your spiritual life that you look back on and say, "That is when something shifted"? What happened?
2. Pastor Mike described a week of feeling unsettled and attributed some of it to spiritual opposition. Have you ever sensed that kind of resistance right before something significant happened in your faith? What did that feel like?

Digging Deeper

3. Luke 11:9-13 describes a Father who gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask. Does that promise feel easy or difficult to believe personally? What gets in the way of simply asking?
4. The message drew a clear distinction between seeking an experience and seeking God Himself. Why do you think that distinction matters? How can someone tell the difference in their own heart?
5. The message covered four biblical uses of laying on of hands: blessing, commissioning, ministry, and stirring up spiritual gifts. Were any of these new to you? Which one resonates most with where you are right now?
6. Pastor Mike referenced 2 Timothy 1:6, where Paul urges Timothy to rekindle or fan into flame the gift God placed in him. What do you think causes a spiritual gift to go dormant in someone's life? What does fanning it into flame look like practically?
7. The message mentioned that the church at Laodicea in Revelation was preaching and teaching about Jesus while He was standing outside knocking. What does it look like for a church, or an individual, to talk about Jesus while keeping Him at a distance?

Personal Reflection

8. Pastor Mike was transparent about his own struggle, saying he can have more passion for getting up and going to work than for getting up and going to God. Can you relate to that? What tends to crowd out your time with God?
9. The message listed several reasons someone might need to make room for God: encouragement, strength, conviction, healing, stirring of gifts, guidance in a decision. Which of those resonated with you most right now, and why?
10. Pastor Mike said, "You don't have to understand everything to seek God. You don't have to have it all together to encounter God. You just have to come seeking and be hungry." Is there anything that has been keeping you from seeking God more fully? What would it look like to set that aside?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

- **Practice the Ask, Seek, Knock Pattern:** Set aside fifteen minutes each morning this week before checking your phone, email, or beginning your work. Use that time to simply ask God to lead you, seek His presence, and knock on the door of His purposes for your life that day. At your next group meeting, share what you noticed.
- **Identify a Gift You May Be Sitting On:** Prayerfully consider whether there is a spiritual gift, a calling, or an area of ministry that God has placed in you that you have been neglecting or ignoring. Write it down. Share it with a trusted person in your group and ask them to pray with you about it.
- **Practice Open-Handed Prayer:** This week, when you pray, begin by physically opening your hands as a posture of surrender. Instead of leading with your requests, begin by asking God, "What do you want to do in me today?" Keep a brief journal of what you sense Him saying.
- **Pray for Someone in Your Group:** Take time during your small group meeting to pray for one another. If group members are comfortable, practice the biblical pattern of laying a hand on the shoulder of the person you are praying for as you lift them up. Keep it simple, sincere, and rooted in Scripture.

- **Examine What You Are Pursuing:** Spend time in honest reflection this week. Ask yourself whether you are more drawn to seeking God Himself or to seeking what God can give you, whether that is answered prayer, a good feeling, or spiritual gifts. Bring your honest answer back to the group.

Prayer Requests & Closing

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to different perspectives on Israel; focus on biblical teaching rather than politics
- Encourage participation from everyone, but don't force anyone to share
- If someone wants to give their life to Christ during discussion, be prepared to pray with them
- Keep the discussion focused on personal application, not just theological debate
- Consider inviting someone knowledgeable about Israel or Jewish culture to a future meeting