

## Small Group Guide: FAMILY LIFE - Too Busy To Be Close

**Opening Question** When you were a kid, what did a “busy day” look like for you, and how is that different from a busy day now?

**Opening Prayer** *Heavenly Father, thank you for bringing us together today. As we talk about our schedules, our margins, and being yoked to Jesus, help us to be honest, relaxed, and open to you. Show us where our lives are out of alignment, and gently lead us back to your pace and your priorities. We invite your Spirit to guide our discussion and to encourage each heart here. In Jesus’ name, amen.*

### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

**Direction is shaped by small decisions.**

Our lives are mostly steered by accumulated small choices, not just a few big life events. Those small choices set our rhythm, priorities, and capacity over time.

**We are all yoked to something.**

Jesus invites us to take His yoke (Matthew 11:28–30), which means:

**Directional alignment** – going the same way He’s going.

**Pacing alignment** – moving at His speed, not ours or the culture’s.

**Margins are spiritual, not just practical.**

Margin is “the extra amount allowed beyond what is needed.” Healthy margins mean:

The ability to respond to needs without panic.

Being present in relationships without constant distraction.

Freedom to rest and reflect without guilt. Having margin is about intentional availability to God and people, not laziness.

**The culture pulls us toward foolish busyness.**

By nature we drift toward foolishness, overcommitment, and exhaustion (Ephesians 5:15–17). Culture rewards nonstop availability and productivity, but this usually compresses what matters most: God, family, health, and soul.

**We must ask wiser scheduling questions.**

Instead of: “Do I have time? Can I fit it in?”

A better filter is: “Because \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me, is it wise to say yes or no?”

We weigh each decision against God-given priorities (marriage, kids, spiritual life, etc.).

**Every ‘yes’ is a stewardship decision.**

Every time we say yes to something, we automatically say no to something else (time, focus, energy). Saying “no” isn’t selfish; it’s stewardship.

**Don’t conform; be transformed.**

Romans 12:2 warns us not to be conformed to the pattern of this world (constant busyness and overcommitment), but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so we can discern God’s will.

**The first things to go are usually the most important.**

When we get busy, often the first things we drop are:

Intimate time with God.

Intentional time of rest.

Yet these are exactly what realign us with Jesus and restore our souls.

**Rest is trust.**

Biblical rest is not just inactivity; it is an act of trust in God’s sovereignty and provision. Like the Sabbath, fallow land, or a closed Chick-fil-A on Sunday, rest says, “God, I believe You can do more with my limited time than I can by running nonstop.”

## Discussion Questions

1. **Read Matthew 11:28–30.**

What do you notice about the kind of people Jesus invites (“weary,” “burdened”)?

What does it practically mean for you to “take [His] yoke” and “learn from” Him in your current pace of life?

2. **Read Ephesians 5:15–17.**

According to Paul, what does it look like to live “wise” rather than “unwise”?

Where do you see culture pulling you toward foolish use of time or opportunities?

3. **Read Romans 12:1–2.**

What are some “patterns of this world” related to busyness and productivity that you feel pressure to conform to?

How might your schedule look different if it were truly being “transformed by the renewing of your mind” instead?

4. Pastor Dan said, “The problem is not that people are doing too much that is wrong, but that we are doing too much that is simply not essential.”

When you look at your typical week, what kinds of “non-essential” things tend to crowd out what is truly important?

5. The sermon suggested a better question for scheduling:

*“Because \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me, is it wise to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’?”*

What are your top 2–3 God-given priorities in this season (e.g., walk with God, marriage, kids, health, ministry)?

How might this question change a current or upcoming decision on your calendar?

6. Pastor Dan mentioned that when life gets busy, two things are usually first to go: (1) intimate time with God and (2) intentional rest.

Which of these tends to slip first for you, and what does that drift look like?

What usually alerts you that you’re out of alignment with Jesus’ pace?

7. The sermon described healthy margins as:

- Ability to respond to needs without internal panic.
- Capacity to be present in relationships without distraction.
- Freedom to be interrupted without irritation.
- Space to rest and reflect without guilt.

If you had to pick one of these that you’d most like to grow in over the next month, which would it be and why?

## Practical Applications (Choose one or two.)

- 1. Daily “Yoke Check” (5–10 minutes with God).** Set aside a brief, consistent time each day (morning, lunch, or evening) to:
  - Read a few verses (e.g., Matthew 11:28–30, Psalm 23, or a Gospel passage),
  - Ask: *“Lord, am I walking at Your pace today or my own?”*
  - Pray briefly for alignment with His direction and speed.
- 2. Practice One Intentional “No” This Week.** Before you say yes to a new request or commitment, pause and ask: *“Because \_\_\_\_\_ is important to me, is it wise to say yes or no?”*  
Choose one thing to say no to, and pay attention to what that frees up (time with God, family, rest, etc.).
- 3. Plan a Weekly Sabbath Slot.** Choose a block of time (2–4 hours, or a half-day) this week where you:
  - Stop work, chores, and “production.”
  - Engage in restful, God-honoring activities (worship, a walk, a nap, time with loved ones, unhurried prayer).
  - Treat it as an act of trust, not laziness.
- 4. Create a Simple Priority List.**  
Write down your top 3–5 biblical priorities in this season (e.g., God, spouse, kids, church family, health).  
Keep the list where you see it (phone lock screen, bathroom mirror) and use it as a filter before adding new commitments.
- 5. Tech Boundaries for Presence.**  
Pick one regular time slot this week (e.g., dinner, first 30 minutes at home after work, last 30 minutes before bed) to:
  - Put your phone away, turn off notifications, and be fully present with God or people.
  - Use that time for conversation, prayer, reading Scripture, or simply being together without distraction.

## Memory Verse for This Week

Matthew 11:28 (NIV)

*“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.”*

**Closing Prayer** *Lord Jesus, thank you for inviting weary and burdened people like us to come to you and find rest. We confess that we often let culture set our pace instead of you. Help us this week to say wise ‘yes’s’ and wise ‘no’s’, to build healthy margins, and to walk in step with your gentle and humble heart. Realign our priorities with yours, and let our homes and schedules reflect your kingdom rather than the world’s pressure. Go with each person here and keep speaking to us as we make changes. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.*