



MEETING AGENDA

ICEBREAKER (10 MINUTES)

We read about praising God all throughout Scripture. Do you have a favorite song, psalm, or praise Scripture? If praise is a new idea for you, what questions do you have about it?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[There is no right answer, but these questions will give people the opportunity to share their perspective on and experience with praise. Consider people's backgrounds, habits and approaches to praising God. For some, does praise occur only at church? Do others give praise in regular prayer?]

INTRODUCTION (5-10 MINUTES)

Was there one idea that stood out to you from today's message on praising God through doxologies?

God is our good Shepherd, and he takes care of us, His sheep. What did you learn about this symbolic statement, and what other truths can you find in this comparison?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Allow people to share other facts they may know about the characteristics of sheep and God's care for us. Be open to new ideas and personal examples they may have about how God cares for us as His sheep.]

INTO THE WORD (25 MINUTES)

1. Did you notice in Matthew 26:30 that the disciples sang a hymn before going to the Mount of Olives? Give a few of your thoughts on the doubts and fears in the group and what it meant to them to praise God at that moment. Share a time when praise helped you overcome your own doubts and fears.

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[Remind the group how impactful it is to know God will never leave us. He always protects us with His salvation through sin, guilt, and misfortune. We can always rely on His greatness, authority, and power. Take time to allow people to share their own experiences.]

2. Read Jude 1:24-25. David said that God protects us, among other ways, through misfortunes. In what ways can we trust in God's protection during hard times?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[In the article, "7 Solid Principles for Trusting God in Difficult Times", published by One Exceptional Life, a number of suggestions are given for trusting God through misfortune. These include spending time in prayer, keeping a gratitude journal as a record of everything God has done for us, and putting whatever we face in God's hands.]

3. In the Book of Jude, in verses 16 and 17, the author speaks of those who criticize and complain. Read Numbers 11 verse 1 and consider how quickly we humans forget the promises of God. What trouble does this cause us?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[At times, we are prone to forget all God has done for us and focus on our problems. This can cause us to become depressed and hopeless and magnify our trials instead of God. God wants to see us through our hardships just as He has for generations before us. Therefore, we should worship instead of worry, glorify instead of grumbling, and be faithful instead of fearful.]

4. Read Genesis 50:20 and Isaiah 61:3. How does the reality of God using evil for good and creating beauty for ashes affect your perception of hardships and your understanding of who God is?

H.O.S.T. GUIDANCE

[God uses what the enemy means for evil for His Will and our good. In this way, God uses hardships to bring us closer to Him by sanctifying us and increasing our dependence on Him. This can help us realize God's power and fatherly love for us as he is faithfully present through (and has a purpose for) all our challenges in life.]

APPLICATION (25 MINUTES)

[Hosts: don't feel pressure to cover all the questions below. Pick the one or two questions that might lead to the best conversation, but if discussion fades, include the others.]

1. Discuss how giving thoughtful, frequent praise to God can be a ready reminder of who God is and keep us from drifting into prideful self-sufficiency or lonely struggles that drag us down.
2. What happens in your mind, body, spirit, and life when you experience a great praise song, Bible doxology, or spoken prayer? How do moments of praise and honor to God change your frame of mind and behavior in the near and longer term?

3. We must intentionally spend time with and praise God, especially when life is difficult and distracting. In her weekly devotional, "Ways to Worship God Daily," Kennedy Lane writes that vital steps to do this, particularly in hard times, include starting your day with God by reading your Bible for a few minutes and meditating on God's truth rather than our circumstances. We can also do this by regularly writing down things God has done for us that we are thankful for as a reminder. What are some things you can do in all circumstances, especially during difficult times, to keep your focus and praise toward God?
4. What are some practical ways you can reflect on the faithfulness of God and praise Him in your daily life?

PRAYER (10 MINUTES)

*Father God, in a world that often makes human accomplishments, abilities, and well-being the highest goals, remind us through praise to You that true power, greatness, and authority are from You and are meant to bring the fulfillment of your Kingdom. Remind us of the doxologies in your Word, and place a new song in our hearts when we need it the most. In Jesus' name, **Amen**.*