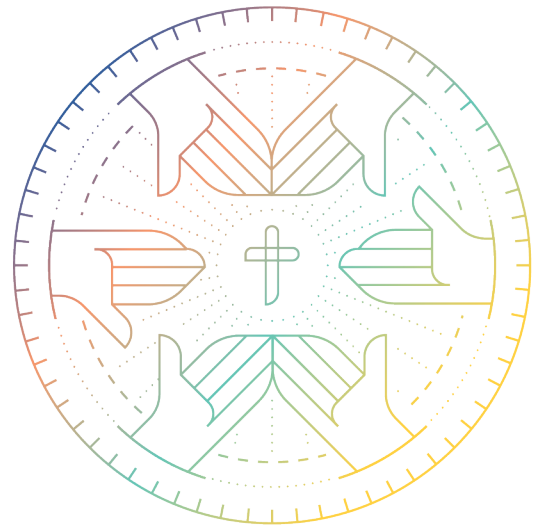


Group Life.

W E A R E B E T T E R T O G E T H E R



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

More Than a Story: “Prepared, Not Preoccupied”
Scripture Focus: Matthew 25:1-13

ICEBREAKER

What’s something small you always try to remember to pack or prepare for when traveling?

Have you ever felt unprepared for something important in life—spiritually, emotionally, or practically?
What did you learn from that experience?

INTRODUCTION

In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, Jesus invites us to live with anticipation and readiness. His return is not a distant myth—it’s a promised reality. The story of the ten virgins teaches us that spiritual preparation isn’t something we can borrow or rush. It must be cultivated now.

What stood out to you from the message this week?

INTO THE WORD

Read Matthew 25:1–13, Matthew 24:42–44, and 1 Thessalonians 5:2. Jesus often spoke about His return—but never with a date. Why is that significant? What does it mean to live spiritually “awake” and alert in today’s world?

Read Matthew 24:36, Matthew 24:4–14, and 2 Peter 3:10. Why do you think Jesus lists signs of His return in Matthew 24? What’s the difference between being aware and being preoccupied? How can we avoid getting caught up in distractions?

Read Matthew 25:4–6, Matthew 24:45–47, and John 14:2–3. How do ordinary, daily acts of faithfulness prepare us for eternity? What “oil” are you storing in your spiritual lamp right now?

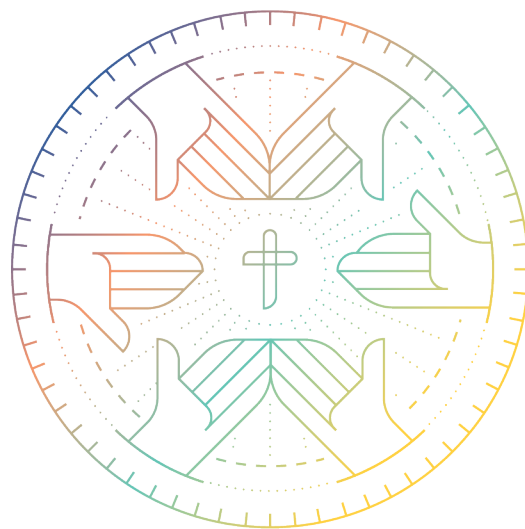
EMBRACE AND EMBODY

This parable isn’t about fear—it’s about focus. Jesus is coming again. Not maybe. Not someday. He is returning to make all things new. But instead of telling us when, He tells us how to live: ready.

To embrace this parable is to pay attention to your oil. Are you seeking God daily? Do you have rhythms that keep your faith alive, even when you feel weary or distracted? Being prepared doesn’t mean you have it all together—it means you’ve surrendered your life to the One who does.

Group Life.

W E A R E B E T T E R T O G E T H E R



Some of us are preoccupied—by the world, our schedules, our doubts. If that's you, ask: What has taken my attention off of Jesus? What needs to shift for me to live with spiritual urgency again? What does a surrendered life look like?

Others of us may feel like we're waiting—but we don't feel ready. If that's you, remember this: Jesus isn't looking for performance. He's looking for presence. He wants to know you. He wants you to know Him.

To embody this message means living the Essentials. Prepare by Seeking God Daily in prayer and Scripture. Build Deep Relationships that keep your faith awake. Serve Others, Live Generously, Make God Known, and Worship God in your daily rhythms. These are your oil. Are you living like you believe Jesus is coming again or do you need to hit the reset button?

PRAYER PRACTICE

Invite your group into a moment of silence. Say:

"Picture yourself as one of the bridesmaids waiting for the groom. Do you feel prepared or distracted? What does Jesus want you to hear right now?"

After a minute of reflection, close in prayer.

OPTIONAL CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for reminding us that You are coming again. Help us not to live in fear or distraction, but in faith and readiness. Give us the courage to surrender what distracts us and fill us with the oil of Your presence. May our lives reflect Your hope and Your love as we wait. Teach us to be faithful in the small things while we longingly anticipate Your return. In Jesus' name, Amen.