



Small Group Guide | Session 5

Alpha Prayer Points

Pray for people to stick with Alpha, including through the upcoming weekend retreat on May 20th. As the focus of the weekend is the Holy Spirit and prayer, it is an incredible opportunity for people to encounter God. Pray for people to come and to feel safe to open themselves to God in prayer, so that they might experience His love and presence.

Pray for those who have found Alpha to be too “Christian” or too “gospel-focused.” Pray that God would continue to water the seeds that have been planted and that He would bring others to walk alongside them on their journey, to guide them to Himself.

Pray for energy, strength, and spiritual protection for those participating in and serving with Alpha, and for all to be led by the Spirit.

HOW DID IT GO?

- Last week in Pastor Curtis' sermon (4/7), he said that Jonah was the ultimate homebody. Jonah did not want to leave the comfort of his home to preach to pagans. How has your study of Jonah to date increased your willingness to get uncomfortable for God? What steps have you taken?
- What areas of your life are you tempted to run from God's call? How do you respond in loving obedience?
- Were you able to relate to your neighbors in such a way they know they could reach out to you for encouragement, support, and prayer?
- What plans have you and/or your small group developed to serve with an FPC partner ministry?

Read aloud the passages for this week: **Jonah 1:17-2:10.**

HEAD | Observe the text and the author's main points.

1. Verse 1:17 describes a new setting. What three things happen? What does the phrase “the LORD his God” in 2:1 tell us?
2. In recounting the prayer in verses 2-9, Jonah reveals his exchange with the LORD.
 - a. What does he acknowledge?
 - b. What is he thankful for?
3. Jonah said he looked to “your holy Temple” in verses 4 and 7. What does that mean?
4. Pinpoint, if you can, a turning point in Jonah’s life.

HEART | Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

1. If your group has not yet discussed this question: when have you rebelled, wanting to run the opposite direction from God’s plan for you? What stopped you? Or turned you around?
2. What has God done to get your attention? How has God gotten your attention in surprising ways?
3. How has God shown you mercy? Like David in Psalm 40, Jonah says that God brought his life up from the pit (verse 6). Describe a time when God brought you up—whether in the sense of eternal salvation, or of rescue from rock bottom.
4. Describe an experience where prayer (and/or Scripture) flowed out of you in an hour of need.

HANDS | Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

Reaching Upwards | Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Ask God to show you His path forward with Him. God promises enough light for each step (Psalm 119:105). Watch and listen for His answers.
- In what setting are you most likely to hear God’s direction? Go there.
- How can you begin to internalize Scripture now, so that in an hour of need, you can pray Scripture?

Reaching Outward | Investing in Your Neighbors

- Watch for a “neighbor” in crisis. How will you “be there” for him or her?
- Pastor Curtis said that our lives should point people to Jesus. What does that look like in your life?

Reaching Beyond

- Where or how do you serve God outside the sphere of FPC?

- How do your spiritual and natural gifts align with an FPC ministry? Find out more information about getting involved with it.
- First Presbyterian Church of Houston is situated in an area where people are facing storms from poverty, homelessness, health crises, and more. When could your small groups volunteer together with a partner ministry, such as Main Street Ministries, the Nehemiah Center, or elsewhere, to support God's work in calming the storm in our city? See <https://fpchouston.org/upcoming-opportunities/> for opportunities to serve our city.
- To learn more about different ministry partners, consider joining one of the upcoming events:
 - Local Mission Partner Field Trip: The Landing
Thurs | May 25th 4 - 5 PM
 - Every Shelter | Dignify The Displaced - An Art Auction
Fri | June 2 | 6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

For more information about either ministry partner event, please reach out to FPC Missions Director Mary-Floye Federer, mffederer@fpchouston.org.