

OVERBOARD!



Small Group Guide | Session 6

Alpha Prayer Points

Pray for people to stick with Alpha. We've had over 100 individuals come through this round; over 50 are non-Christian and/or consider themselves "spiritual but not religious." Huge praise: eight non-Christians even invited their own friends to join—God is answering our prayers about this community being distinctly welcoming and appealing.

The focus of the Alpha weekend on Saturday May 20 was the Holy Spirit and prayer; it was an incredible opportunity for people to encounter God. **Pray** for those who came and felt safe to open themselves to God in prayer that God would continue to grow the seeds sown, and that they would find themselves desiring relationship with Him.

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?

- Jonah's prayer from the belly of the fish showed familiarity with the Psalms. In his sermon May 14, Pastor Curtis suggested we read and pray through the Psalms. What is your experience reading and praying the Psalms?
- What steps have you taken to internalize Scripture so that when you are in difficult situations, you can pray Scripture?
- Where or how are you serving God outside of FPC?

Read aloud the passages for this week: **Jonah 3:1-10.**

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

1. Reread Jonah 1:1-3 and compare it to Jonah 3:1-3. What do you notice? What is the same? What is different?
2. List the response(s) you see from the Ninevites in the passage.
3. How does this compare to the response(s) of the sailors in chapter 1?
4. Compare the "turning" in Jonah 2:8, 3:9, and 3:10. How are they similar? Different?

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

1. How might God relenting from bringing judgment on the Ninevites offend our sense of justice?
2. Read Matthew 12:38-41. When the scribes and Pharisees ask Jesus for a sign, he points back to the people of Nineveh, who believed the word of God without asking for a sign. Describe a time in your life when it was clear from Scripture what you needed to do, but you still wanted a sign from God.

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

- As Christians, we might externally obey (going through the motions of behaving "rightly") while our hearts are far from God's heart. What actions will you take this week to submit your heart (thoughts, attitude, and will) to God so that it becomes more like His?

Reaching Outward | Investing in Your Neighbors

- Jonah is a part of God's chosen people of Israel; however, he never speaks to another Israelite in the book of Jonah. He exclusively preaches and prophecies to foreigners and outsiders. In what way(s) might God be calling you to build relationships with those around you who are different from you and/or do not yet know Him?
- Your youngest neighbors at church need adults who will share God's love with them by serving with Vacation Bible School. (You will be fully prepped, equipped, and resourced to serve, and you will be blessed by experiencing God's love through them.) VBS runs 9am-noon June 5-9, so sign up for any amount of time you can give at: www.fpchouston.org/vbs
- Jonah shows us God's concern for cities like Houston. Plan a time when your small group can volunteer together with a partner ministry, such as Main Street Ministries or the Nehemiah Center. See <https://fpchouston.org/upcoming-opportunities/> for opportunities to serve our city.
- God is a sending God, who "never calls us in to bless us without also sending us out to be a blessing to others," Keller writes in *The Prodigal Prophet*. He reminds us: "This may or may not entail leaving physical and social locations, but it always means risk and vulnerability" (186). Where might God be calling you to assume risk and vulnerability to share the good news with others?

Reaching Beyond

- In this passage, we see God is a God of second chances. Jonah receives a second chance to obey His command, and God gives the people of Nineveh a chance to repent of their sins and change their ways.
 - When have you received a second chance? When have you extended a second chance to someone?
 - As we seek to grow in Christlikeness, consider who you need to forgive. Pray for that person. As you pray, consider whether or not the Holy Spirit is leading you to reach out to them to reconcile. (As a reminder, know that forgiveness can happen without reconciliation, and that sometimes boundaries are best.)
- To learn more about different ministry partners, join an upcoming event:
 - Local Mission Partner Field Trip: The Landing
Thurs | May 25 | 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, mfederer@fpchouston.org. To RSVP, email Missions Coordinator Kennedy Hunter at khunter@fpchouston.org.