



Small Group Guide | Session 7

Alpha Prayer Points

Praise God—the Alpha weekend had the greatest number of participants of any FPC Holy Spirit weekend to date, with 42 people joining. We prayed for people to feel safe and to open themselves to God. One person even said: “In my 65 years of life, this is the first time I have had a positive experience with the church.”

Pray that as the end of Alpha approaches on June 1st, the participants would want to get connected to FPC and to continue their spiritual journey—and that we as a church would create space for them in our lives.

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?

- In her sermon on May 21, Pastor Caitlin said that God simply wants our willingness, and that when we respond with ordinary obedience, He can do the extraordinary through us. What steps have you taken to respond to God's prompting with ordinary obedience? Where are you resisting?
- God is a God of second chances. Jonah received a second chance to obey His command, and God gave 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?

Read aloud the passages for this week: **Jonah 4:1-4.**

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

1. Compare Jonah's prayer in 2:1-9 and 4:2-3. What has changed?
2. What might the content of Jonah's prayer in chapter 4:2-3 reveal about his relationship with God? What does Jonah misunderstand about God?
3. Read Luke 15:11-31. Which one of the characters is Jonah acting most like, and in what ways?
4. How does God challenge Jonah in verse 4?

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

1. Jonah was mad that God did not bring judgment on the Ninevites. When have you been angry at God because He did not do what you wanted? How did you express it?
2. Is anger wrong? If not, what appropriate ways have you found to express it to God?
3. Jonah appears to understand God's character (v.2b from Exodus 34:6-7), but does not share God's heart. In what ways might God be asking you to move from knowing about His character to living out His character?

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

- The psalter is the prayer book of the Bible. It includes many kinds of psalms including praise, lament, Messianic. Imprecatory psalms, or psalms of anger, are an appeal for God's vengeance on the psalmist's enemies if they will not repent. See, for example, Psalms 5, 40, 52, 69, 94, and 143. How can praying these Psalms help us when we are angry?

Reaching Outward | Investing in Your Neighbors

- Pray about starting a summer small group for people who will be finishing ALPHA on June 1st. They need a safe space to continue to learn about God and ask questions, get integrated in to community, and ultimately start studying the Bible in an accessible way. Contact Pastor Caitlin at crhodes@fpchouston.org if you'd like to learn about how you can be equipped and resourced to lead a group.
- Jonah shows us God's concern for great cities like Nineveh and like Houston. Where are you planning to volunteer as a small group with an FPC partner ministry, such as Main Street Ministries or the Nehemiah Center? If you have not planned anything yet, see <https://fpchouston.org/upcoming-opportunities/> for opportunities to serve our city.
- FPH Vacation Bible School serves our youngest neighbors. The church needs adults who will share God's love with them by serving at VBS. Training, resources, and snacks will be provided. You will be blessed to be a blessing by experiencing God's love through your service. VBS runs 9am-noon June 5-9. Sign up for any amount of time you can give at: www.fpchouston.org/vbs

Reaching Beyond

- Where is God calling you to give up some of your comfort and security to share the good news with others? Begin by exploring opportunities with FPC ministry partners by joining one of these upcoming events:
 - Every Shelter | Dignify The Displaced - An Art Auction
Fri June 2 | 6-10pm
 - Local Mission Partner Field Trip: The Forge for Families
Thurs June 22 | 12:00 noon

For more information about either 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.