

Shapes for Living

Week 2: Praying. Group leaders notes

Before the meeting

As with each week you can choose where to focus.

Please look at the online resources for the week and decide where you want your group to focus. Decide how you want to structure the time - discussion, praying, activity

Beginning the meeting

Please begin with words of welcome – and give time to share names if folk don't know each other.

An opening prayer. Invite the Holy Spirit to be in the room as you gather as God's people. Pray for God's love to be ever present in patience, kindness and mutual respect.

Confidentiality and sensitivity: Please ask that the time be a 'safe space' for people to share as they wish. Some might share quite personally. It is important to agree that no-one's personal story is shared outside the room.

It is a safe space for questions; no questions are stupid or unimportant and everyone should feel they have - and be enabled to by both you as the leader and all participants – an equal opportunity to contribute if they wish.

Introduce the theme

Whatever you are focussing on there are questions provided to help discussion.

Don't be afraid to leave silences – some people need longer to decide what they want to say.

If someone is tending to talk too much politely take charge – 'Thank you for what you have said. I wonder if others here have things they would like to share?'

Prayer activity

On the online downloads for this week there are several suggestions for reflecting on prayer. One of the prayer activities could be part of the time together. There are also suggestions for personal and for praying together.

Gathering up at the end

Allow time for people to gather and say what they feel has been important, something they are taking away a question to go on exploring etc.

A flip chart can help.

It may help to agree what we might want to include by way of closing prayer.

Simple structures are a help:

- We thank you for ...
- We ask for ...

Examen

You might use the prayer of examen at the end of the course booklet.

Allow a few moments between each section.

Pray the Shapes of Living course prayer.

Please note for next week:

Week three ('Working') – one exercise requires that everyone bring something that symbolises work for them. It can be any kind of work – paid, career, voluntary, hobby, past or present. It could be company letterhead, a tool, a picture, uniform ... please check the resource 'Mapping out working world' for full information ahead of time.