



Leader Guide – Weekly Gathering

1 Samuel 8 • for the week of May 14 • by Steve Fawver

Opening (5 minutes)

Take time as leaders to welcome people and set a tone of joy and openness in community.

Check-in Time (15 minutes)

What was something you did this week that you want others to know about?

Centering Worship (10 minutes)

Read Psalm 84 or have someone in the group read this. Spend a few moments in silence as a group, sitting with these words and images. Invite simple prayers from those in the group.

Sharing (15 minutes)

Questions you might use during this time:

- Where have you experienced God this week?
- What stood out to you as you used the exercises this week?
- What exercise or section of Scripture caught your attention and why?
- Ask group members to look back over their journals and share some things that catch their attention.
- Ask group members to look back at the last worship gathering on Sunday. Where did they experience God?
- What did you notice (sense, feel, think, learn) this week as we gathered for worship?
- How did God show up in your life this week?
- How have you been intentional in creating space to listen to Christ this week?

Stepping Stones (10 minutes)

Encourage whoever is on for this week to share. Remind the group to listen well and be praying for this person. You may or may not want to take some time to pray as a group for the individual who shares.

Group Listening Practice (40 minutes)

Have group members turn to 1 Samuel 8. Read this if you sense this would be appropriate.

Focus on verse 19. Read this verse out loud. There seems to be a sense of the people not wanting to listen to Samuel or God and being “determined” to do their own things. Ask your group to share what things they sense were the desires of the people? Why would they want a king?

Say: Now we are going to take some time to consider our desires and name these in the presence of Christ.

Read the following Celtic prayer titled “The Soul’s Desire”:

“My soul’s desire is to see the face of God, and to rest in his house.
My soul’s desire is to study the Scriptures, and to learn the ways of God.
My soul’s desire is to be freed from all fear and sadness, and to share Christ’s risen life.
My soul’s desire is to imitate my King, and to sing his praises always.
My soul’s desire is to enter the gates of heaven, and to gaze upon the light that shines forever.
Dear Lord, you alone know what my soul truly desires, and you alone can satisfy those desires.”
(*Celtic Prayers*, Robert Van De Weyer, p. 37)

Take a few moments to have people share what they noticed in this prayer.

Say: Now we are going to take some time to write out a similar prayer. I would encourage you to start each line with “My soul’s desire is...” and then to write out a prayer of your heart’s desires. Don’t try to clean up your desires, but be honest and real before God. What do you desire? Write this prayer as it comes to the surface. My soul’s desire is.... Listen once more to the Celtic prayer and then take some time to write out your prayer.

Read the Celtic prayer once more.

Give people 6-7 minutes to write. You may want to let them know when there are a couple of minutes left so they know what to expect.

Say: I want to read the final line of the Celtic prayer, and if you want to add this as a closing to your prayer, feel free to do this.

Read the final line of the prayer a couple of times through.

Say: Now we are going to close our time by taking a few moments of silence to allow us to name some of our desires out loud to Jesus, who is here with us. As you feel lead you may want to read a line or two of your written prayer out loud. Let’s pray our desires out to God.

When it seems right you may want to close this time by speaking the last line of the Celtic prayer out loud in the following way: “Dear Lord, you alone know what our souls truly desire, and you alone can satisfy those desires.”

Thank God for this time of prayer.

Say: What did you notice as you wrote, prayed, and sat with your desires? Did you sense God’s presence in these places? Describe your experience.

Closing (5 minutes)

Encourage people to continue to listen to Christ this week.