

**Session 1: Our Counsellor and companion**

1-7 MAY

ICEBREAKER

Describe the qualities that a close friend would possess and the benefits good friendships bring.

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit is God Himself. He longs for us to form an intimate relationship with Him so we can benefit from His wisdom, encouragement, strength and comfort.

KEY VERSE

'... I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever ...'
John 14:16

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why do we often choose to muddle along rather than seek advice?
2. What are the disadvantages of being alone?
3. To what extent do you relate to and rely on the Holy Spirit?
4. Why should we be unafraid of the Holy Spirit?
5. How can we achieve the right balance of seeking wisdom from God and others?
6. In what sense is the Holy Spirit like a legal advocate?
7. How do you generally relate to the Holy Spirit; as a person or as an influence?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, anointed by the Holy Spirit, ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit, offered Himself to God through the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14) and was raised from death by the Holy Spirit. He was totally dependent on the Holy Spirit throughout His life.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray for an openness to the Holy Spirit, and that you would not be afraid of forming a closer relationship with Him.
- Pray that you will come to a greater understanding of the Holy Spirit and His role in your own life.

Session 2: Our potential in God

8-15 MAY

ICEBREAKER

Think of examples of where great potential is masked and how it may be released – eg a geologist locating oil under the desert.

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit longs to counsel us in such a way that we see beyond our human limitations to the limitless potential that God sees in us.

KEY VERSE

'And we ... are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory ...'
2 Corinthians 3:18

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Compare how you see yourself to how God sees you.
2. How may the way others see us affect us for good or ill?
3. Why have we been chosen in Christ?
4. Why may we have a false self-image?
5. How can we rise above our limitations?
6. How can God's vision for your life entice you to greatness?
7. Can you identify the limitations you need to overcome?
8. Describe the person God meant you to be.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

Although people despised Jesus' hometown and lack of religious qualifications, He rose above the perceived limitations of others to fulfil His destiny in God.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray that God would reveal any self-imposed limitations and give you the courage and ability to fulfil the potential He has placed in you.
- Pray for others who you know are yet to achieve all the potential God has for them.



Session 3: The Holy Spirit helps us to pray

16-22 MAY

ICEBREAKER

Write a short prayer of praise, thanks or petition and share it with the group – eg 'Father, I praise You for ...', 'Father, I thank You for ...', 'Father, I ask You for ...'

KEY THOUGHT

Many of us struggle to pray on a regular basis or we feel inadequate in the art of prayer. The Holy Spirit will not only prod us to pray but guide us into a rich and meaningful prayer life.

KEY VERSE

'... the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how to pray as we should; but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words.' Romans 8:26, TLB

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. What are the enemies of an effective prayer life?
2. How did Jesus prioritise prayer and how can you?
3. What animal would describe your prayer life – eg a hare, a tortoise, an eagle, a sloth, a dove, a lion?
4. How can we ensure prayer does not become a mechanical exercise?
5. How are prayer and desire linked?

6. Are we too respectable to groan in prayer?
7. How could you become more sensitive to those who groan?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.' Hebrews 5:7

PRAYER POINTERS

- Ask God to show you what may be restricting your prayer life, and then ask Him to remove it.
- Choose a person or situation where there is great concern, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray – eg a bereavement, national disaster etc.

Session 4: The Holy Spirit purifies us

23-31 MAY

ICEBREAKER

Which cleansing products do you use and why those brands – eg toothpaste, soap, detergent etc? Do you prefer a bath or shower?

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit reveals impure areas in our lives through loving confrontation and then purifies us to be more like Jesus.

KEY VERSES

'When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin ...' John 16:8
'... he purified their hearts by faith.' Acts 15:9

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Explore the meaning of the phrase 'loving confrontation'.
2. Contrast the motivations of Jesus and the Pharisees in exposing sin.
3. How does God help us overcome the arguments of sin?
4. Is a sinful thought sinful?
5. Find a copy of the poem 'Footprints' and discuss its relevance to your own experience.
6. How may we be yoked to unbelievers?
7. What modern-day evils are regarded as good?

8. What is your view and practice of spiritual self-examination? Also think more widely in terms of weight and physical checks, also MOTs for cars etc.
9. How does God warn us against sinful desire?

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL AND PETER

'When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"' Galatians 2:14

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray Psalm 139:23-24.
- Ask God for wisdom as to how you may lovingly confront situations of which He does not approve.



Session 5: Bringing clarity and guidance

1-10 JUNE

ICEBREAKER

- Using small maps etc, ask people to find minute information. After a few moments, give them a magnifying glass!
- Give people a pencil and maze puzzle and ask them to discover the way out.

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit shines the light of His divine wisdom into our confusion and guides us through perplexing situations.

KEY VERSE

'... those who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God.' Romans 8:14

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Why does God call us to make choices?
2. In what ways may the Spirit guide us?
3. Recount an occasion when you have had a 'sense of being led'.
4. How can the Holy Spirit become not just a doctrine but a personal dynamic?
5. How can we achieve the right balance of personal planning and God's guidance?
6. Outline the qualities of a Christian ambassador.
7. Does reliance on God turn us into robots?
8. With which of the five forms of guidance are you most and least familiar?

9. How can you incorporate more listening into your prayer time?

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert ...' Luke 4:1

PRAYER POINTERS

- Surrender your self-will and self-reliance to God's will.
- Spend part of your prayer time listening. Pray, 'Speak Lord, for your servant is listening.'

Session 6: The Holy Spirit teaches us

11-17 JUNE

ICEBREAKER

Describe a teacher at school, exercise class, art group, a driving instructor etc.

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit is able to reveal truth to us including the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:6-16).

KEY VERSES

'But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth ... he will tell you what is yet to come.' John 16:13

'... words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truth in spiritual words.'
1 Corinthians 2:13

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Define the process of teaching.
2. What are the qualities of a good teacher?
3. Why is Christian teaching both fixed and progressive?
4. Are different denominations a good thing?
5. How has the Holy Spirit reminded you of certain parts of Scripture?
6. What is the difference between teaching the truth and guiding into the truth?
7. How has the Holy Spirit helped you in practical ways?

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

'In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets.' Ephesians 3:4-5

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray Psalm 119:18.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you more about different aspects of the Person of Jesus.



Session 7: The Holy Spirit comforts us

18-24 JUNE

ICEBREAKER

What forms of comfort do you use when sad – eg chocolate, music, food, poetry, a hot bath?

KEY THOUGHT

The Holy Spirit comforts us when we are sad and strengthens our hearts to persevere through our problems.

KEY VERSE

'... another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever ...' John 14:16, AV

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. Describe a time in your life when someone has 'been there' for you.
2. How may we comfort someone without using words?
3. Why is love better than a lecture when we are in pain?
4. What is the difference between sympathy and empathy?
5. Are our relationships based too much on what people can do for us?
6. What are the similarities and differences between God's deliverance and God's comfort?
7. How may the natural and supernatural combine for people to receive God's comfort?

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

'Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.' 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

PRAYER POINTERS

- Pray comfort for those who are in the midst of difficult circumstances.
- Pray that we will be sensitive and effective channels of God's comfort to others.

Session 8: Receiving His grace

25-30 JUNE

ICEBREAKER

Think of a time when you put off seeking help for something – eg toothache, support coping with a heavy workload, marriage advice. Why are people reluctant to ask for help? Why do male drivers rarely ask for directions?

KEY THOUGHT

The resources of the Divine Counsellor are available to us, yet often we choose to muddle through on our own. When we refuse to open up to Him, to depend on Him and consult Him, we deprive ourselves of the love, wisdom and spiritual sustenance we need to live effectively and dynamically. He will provide His grace, but only if we will open up to Him.

KEY VERSES

'Come near to God and he will come near to you.' James 4:8

'Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.' Hebrews 4:16

DISCUSSION STARTERS

1. How have you experienced God's grace in your own life?
2. Why does God sometimes provide only comfort and not answers?

3. What forms of unreliable comfort do hurting people use?
4. How can we tell the difference between optimism and faith?
5. Discuss the quote, 'I cannot fully believe in a God I can fully understand.'
6. What may hinder us from asking for the Holy Spirit's help?
7. Describe a time when you did ask for the Holy Spirit's help. What happened as a result?
8. Share together the ways in which you seek to be in tune with the Spirit.
9. What has most impacted you from these studies and what can you do in order to experience more of the Divine Counsellor?

THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL

'But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weaknesses." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.' 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

PRAYER POINTERS

- Confess your tendency to live independently of God, refusing to ask Him for help.
- Pray for one another to experience more of the Holy Spirit.