

# **Worship Guide for West Morris Gatherings**

## **September 26-27, 2020**

***Instructions:** The following worship guide is designed to help guide your time together as a gathering. Whether you're meeting online, outside or around your kitchen table - whether you're meeting with a group of people drawn from many places, or your immediate family unit - use this guide however it would best serve your gathering. Follow it exactly or use it as a starting point, and allow the Spirit to guide you and your gathering! Include as many people as possible in the gathering - invite different people to read scripture, lead music, lead prayer, ask questions, etc. The goal is that everyone present would be actively involved throughout the entire time - reading, praying, and discussing.*

### **Welcome - Connecting Time**

- Open your time together with casual conversation that gives everyone an opportunity to participate and join in. Some good questions might be:
  - Where is the darkest place you've ever been? Share a story telling others about that time.
  - Share one really good thing that happened to you this week and where you have seen God at work this week.
  - What are you thankful for this week?
  - What has God been teaching you throughout this pandemic?
- Follow-up from the last time you were together. What have you been thinking about differently? What "next step" did you take in applying God's Word? What "I will" statement did you act on?

### **Worship - Focusing on the Lord**

- A time of worship is about focusing our hearts and attention on God. We often do that through singing, but it can be done many other ways as well. If your group would like to sing, invite someone to lead, or invite someone to share a song on their phone.
- Read Psalm 103 in sections, inviting people to share praises and prayers in response to each section:
  - Ps 103:1-5 - What do you praise the Lord for?
  - Ps 103:6 - Where do you long to see God's justice and righteousness prevail?
  - Ps 103:7-13 - Name the characteristics or attributes of God.
  - Ps 103:14-18 - How have you experienced his love?

- Ps 103:19-22 - How have you seen creation praising God? Where do you see God's hand in creation?

*(If you have children in your group, this might be a good time to dismiss them. If you're anticipating kids being at your gathering, ask 2 teens/adults to lead the short children's time in the basement, backyard, etc during the teaching time. See the file "Children's Teaching Time" for an easy children's teaching guide. Alternatively, invite the kids to stay in the group and include them in the discussion. You might just be surprised how God can speak through even the youngest children!)*

**Discover - Focus on the Word** - The time in God's Word will be a shared conversation among participants. We know that the Holy Spirit can and does speak through all people, and He is the Teacher. Perhaps designate 1-2 people to guide the conversation, although encourage everyone to ask questions, probe further, and dialogue together! There are many questions below to use as needed. Pick and choose which ones fit your group the best, and then be open to how the Spirit prompts and moves!

- **Read:** Invite someone to read Matthew 5:13-16 aloud. You may want to invite several people with different versions/translations to read it aloud.
- **Share:** Ask everyone to share one word that stood out to them in the reading. (This might be a good way to get a quiet group talking.)
- **Discuss:** If your group is large, you may consider breaking into smaller groups of 3-4 to discuss each question to allow greater participation. When beginning the discussion, invite people to share freely, but to also limit their comments to 2-3 minutes to allow opportunity for everyone to share.
  - Have you known someone who is like a light? Describe them and their life. How do you feel about them?
  - What does this passage reveal about God? What does it reveal about people?
  - What questions do you have in response to this scripture?
  - How have you shone God's light before? When is a time that you hid your light? Why?
  - Read Matthew 5:1-12, also known as the Sermon on the Mount. Notice this comes immediately before our passage. How are the two sections of Scripture connected? What does the Sermon on the Mount teaching have to do with shining God's light?
  - In light of this scripture, what is God asking you to continue? What is God asking you to change or stop?
  - How is God calling you to be part of "shining the light" in the next week?
  - What does shining God's light have to do with loving our actual, literal neighbors?

**Respond - Moving into Action** - Don't skip this step! The response may be the most important part of the time in the Word. This is a time to move from hearing and talking about the Word into living into the Word. Discipleship is about obedience and action, not just gaining knowledge, so this response time is critical!

- ***Pause & Pray***: Take a moment of stillness and quiet after the discussion. Invite everyone to ask the Spirit to show them what they need to take from today. What is God showing you? How will you respond?
- ***Listen & Write***: Encourage everyone to write down what they hear from the Lord. Have them come up with an "I will" statement that they will do this week as a result of this passage.
- ***Share & Be Accountable***: Invite people to share their "I Will" statement, as this builds accountability.
- ***Pray in Response***: Respond in prayer. What is the truth you heard today. Pray to God about that. What do you need to confess and ask for God's guidance about in response to this truth?

**Sending Forth** - Invite someone to read Numbers 6:24-26 over the group as a sending forth blessing.

**Announcements** - Here are a few announcements to share with your gathering.

- Next Sunday, October 4, we will be gathering for our Parking Lot Service at West Morris Church (2302 West Morris St) and online at 10:30 AM. Everyone is welcome as we celebrate communion together.
- Would you like to meet again? Our next scheduled time is October 25 - but certainly could meet again sooner!
- Our next sermon series will be based on *The Kingdom Is Like....*, exploring Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom of God.
- Exchange contact information with each other so you can follow up with one another in the next several weeks.
- Looking for information? The West Morris website is the best place to go - [westmorrisfm.org](http://westmorrisfm.org).