



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

9/24/2009

Dear Life Group Leaders,

Ready. Set. Go!

New life groups begin this week. So here is our first e-mailing and regular mailing of the materials you will need to lead your group. For those who are studying the message-based questions, you can find them in the attachment. The passage is Luke 4:31-44, which focuses on a topic I've called "Biblical Healthcare Reform" – a study about the healing ministry of Jesus and what we can apply from his example to our own ministries to the poor and needy. I think you'll enjoy this study. Just be sure not to let your group get sidetracked with a discussion of the failures of Congress and President in the area of healthcare reform. The first question I've asked – what are your hope and fears about the current healthcare reform effort – is not intended to lead to a political discussion. That's something for another time and place. My intention is for them to think about the urgency people feel when their health is in jeopardy and how compassionate Jesus is to help us through our suffering. Make sure they focus on that – their hopes and fears related to healthcare. And if a discussion of the political scene comes up, then quickly turn them to the passages I've suggested which emphasize our responsibility to believe in God's sovereign care for us and our need to respect and pray for those in authority over us.

You'll also find John MacArthur's commentary on the passage on the audio CD we've provided. In addition to that, I've included both a coaching tip and 3 icebreakers that you may find helpful in encouraging your people to open up and share their thoughts with one another. Please read both the 3-page coaching tip and the icebreaker sheet, even if you don't do the message-based study. These materials will prove helpful no matter what topic your group is studying. The coaching tip is especially important to consider. It emphasizes one of the chief purposes of our life group ministry - discipling our people to follow Jesus Christ. In the attachment you'll find a one-page explanation of what a disciple is, as well as a one-page survey that will help you assess how far along the path of discipleship your small group members have come. You can complete the survey yourself as a way of identifying areas you should emphasize over the months ahead to help your people grow in their understanding of Christ and His Word. Or you can have the whole group complete it together as a way of setting goals for your group this year.

Finally, let me thank you again for your faithful leadership of our people and promise you that we are praying for you as you take on this responsibility again. Pray for us as well, and remember – we are in this together and need the support that one another provides.

God bless you!

Pastors Gary and Glen