

FPR Gathering Guidelines

The following guidelines are presented for optimum retention of the material in the *FPR Journal*. Adaptations of the suggested plan are understandable to fit the needs of individual groups and scheduling scenarios. If you have a question, please leave it in the comment box at familyprayerripples.com. The FPR Gathering Guidelines are available to download for group and leader access.

Format of FPR Gatherings

The following pages provide a six-week FPR Gathering layout and tips for facilitators. It is suggested that the first week be the introductory session to distribute the participants' *FPR Journals* and establish the vision of the gatherings. The gatherings that follow in the next five weeks would coincide with the week just completed for each partnership. The suggested ninety-minute gatherings would provide three connection segments: The Introductory Connection, The Going Deeper Connection, and The Re-Group Connection. It is highly recommended that gathering dates are available online, passed out to the attendees, or both.

Gatherings should be in a venue that allows for a comfortable setting where participants feel cared for and safe as they share their thoughts and feelings. Emphasize commitment to attendance for the purpose of community-building and continuity of the material. Gatherings are designed for participants to enjoy the time to process the content more fully.

Plan ahead and decide if the final gathering will include a meal (pot-luck, catered, etc.). Attendees would need to know a few weeks ahead to plan accordingly. Plan for the final gathering to be somewhat longer than the other meetings.

FPR Gathering Facilitators

Facilitators are not teachers, but leaders designed to listen to participants and guide the groups. FPR facilitators should remember to allow everyone the opportunity to speak. However, you may have to tactfully balance the time if any participants are dominating the conversation. Ask and stress participants to honor confidentiality. The content can bring out emotional home and family situations. It is important not to rush, yet to cover the information for that specific partnership.

Please be aware that praying or sharing around a circle, person by person, can be uncomfortable for the ones who are less mature in their faith or who are more introverted. Avoid this approach.

It is important for facilitators to read and complete all of the FPR assigned work before facilitating.

Pray for your FPR Gathering group. Often God uses special relationships formed in groups.

Vision Gathering to the Five PARTnerships

1. Introductory Connection

Pass out *FPR Journals* (books) as the participants enter.

Pray and commit your gatherings of *Family Prayer Ripples: A Journal of Heart & Home* to the Lord. Ask God to change lives, homes, and families. Pray for fresh eyes.

Introduce *Family Prayer Ripples* “language”:

- >> *FPR (Family Prayer Ripples)*
- >> *FPR Journal* (your book)
- >> *PARTnerships* (the five chapters of the book where readers partner with Jesus to better understand their family and home)
- >> Gatherings (group sessions)

Make sure everyone understands that the partnership assigned to each session will be the one discussed at the next gathering.

Consider beginning with an icebreaker or two to get to know the group. This establishes a framework for the meetings to be joy-filled and relational. Example: set a timer for two to three minutes and have attendees write down as many movie or book titles that include the words family, heart, and home. Consider a small prize for the winner.

2. Going Deeper Connection

Questions to ask the group:

Who in your life is most instrumental in forming your philosophy of home?

What event or events in your life were most instrumental in forming your philosophy of home? When did that happen in your life?

Why are you here and why do you want to read *Family Prayer Ripples*?

3. Re-Group Connection

Assign *PARTnership 1: Ripple Reflections*. Participants are to complete the partnership.

Release participants by stating the purpose of the first partnership: to reflect and embrace events and relationships and to recognize that they have been equipped for the future so that they can peacefully choose to partner with Jesus to make family ripples.

Pray that God would allow each person to process their past so that they can better understand how God is working in their homes and families in the present and in the future.

Gathering 1: Ripple Reflections

Participants should have completed *PARTnership 1: Ripple Reflections* before this gathering.

1. Introductory Connection

Welcome everyone with prayer, asking God to help them embrace events and relationships in their past. Encourage participants to recognize how those events and relationships have equipped them for the future so that they can peacefully partner with Jesus (the purpose of this partnership).

2. Going Deeper Connection

Ask participants if they resonate with Debbie's love of being surrounded by water. If not, is it mountains...what is it? In other words, what are their environmental energy-givers?

Ask if participants can visualize spiritual generational family ripplemakers. Did they always recognize that specific person as a generational ripplemaker or did they have a revelation more recently (possibly even by reading and completing *PARTnership 1: Ripple Reflections*)? Mention that it is okay if they have voids in their generational ripples. The past is fixed, but the future can be changed.

Ask the following questions...

What are some specific things you could do to be a generational ripplemaker?

Which personal story in Debbie's life connected with your own story? Explain.

Debbie stated that if you want to partner with Jesus in the areas of family and home, your heart connection with Him must be made first. Ask participants if they would like to share how they became a cherished child of God. Invite them to ask Him to impact their lives through this journal and remind them that God's gift of salvation is available to all who ask Him to forgive their past and invite Him in as Lord and Savior.

How can our relationship with Christ impact our homes and families?

3. Re-Group Connection

This coming week is going to be fun! It shifts from ripple reflection to participants analyzing each room and space in their homes as they partner with Jesus so that they can create practical, joy-filled, and God-honoring homes. There is a lot to share next week.

Optional suggestion according to your allotted time: consider turning to a few pages into *PARTnership 2: Blueprints* and allow individuals to draw a blueprint of their home on the page provided. (This could be done as part of the homework or during this time as a way to capture their attention for the *PARTnership 2: Blueprints*.) Consider providing colored pencils for creativity.

Close with prayer, asking God to honor their homework time for the next gathering as they view the rooms and spaces in their homes to be more practical, joy-filled and God-honoring.

Gathering 2: Blueprints

Participants should have completed *PARTnership 2: Blueprints* before this gathering

1. Introductory Connection

Welcome everyone with prayer, asking God to help them constantly see with fresh eyes the rooms and spaces in their homes to be more practical, joy-filled and God-honoring.

As a fun exercise, ask which participants are newest to their homes and which participants have lived longest in their homes. Consider giving away small prizes such as a gift card to a home improvement store.

Before dismissing into smaller groups, assign rooms of a house to different tables. Tell them they will get the instructions from their table facilitators.

2. Going Deeper Connection

Ask the participants if they have ever drawn a blueprint of their home.

Ask if they have events in their lives that formed their philosophy of home. Did Debbie's stories allow any to flashback to a time this could have happened?

Which room in their home is the most difficult for them? Why?

Which room in their home needs the most work. . .did they not realize it until they took time to reflect in *Blueprints*?

Ask what were their biggest "take-aways" from this partnership.

Activity mentioned in The Introductory Connection ... (example) "Our group was assigned to represent this room: _____. We are going to share some additional and perhaps creative ideas that you can do to make this room or space more practical, joy-filled and God-honoring." Designate a group recorder and assign a speaker to present in Re-Group Connection in a few minutes. They will have a few minutes to share.

3. Re-Group Connection

Each table speaker/representative provides the tips during Re-Group Connection.

For fun, vote on the best tips or room.

Set up the next gathering by explaining they will learn about three events that moved Debbie and her husband from praying ABOUT their home to praying THROUGH it. Have them think about what this may look like for them as they read and complete *PARTnership 3: The Walk-Thru*. *PARTnership 3* purpose emphasizes the need to pray for each space and room in our homes and dedicate them to God so that we fully know and partner with The Builder and True Owner.

End with prayer, thanking Jesus for fresh eyes, creative ideas, and an open heart to view a new way of praying for our homes. Tell everyone to expect to be challenged this week.

Gathering 3: The Walk-Thru

Participants should have completed *PARTnership 3: The Walk-Thru*

1. Introductory Connection

Pray and ask God to teach us to pray for our homes in such a way that we recognize that He is the Master Builder.

Pre-arrange for one person to share a special story about how God specifically led them to their home, knowing it was Him and not just “happenstance.” This may involve inviting a visitor to come for the first few minutes of this gathering.

2. Going Deeper Connection

Questions to ask participants:

Have you ever attended a home dedication or have you personally dedicated your own home?

Have you ever walked through your home and prayed for it, room by room? With whom did you pray through your home?

What did you learn from *PARTnership 3: The Walk-Thru* that speaks to you?

Who has a personal home-finding story about God’s orchestrated home plan for them?

(Up-front leader needs to walk around during the home-finding story time and pick out one to share at the end. Be sure this person is comfortable to be in front of the larger group in *The Re-Group Connection*).

3. Re-Group Connection

The participant who was asked by the leader can share their story at this time.

Assignment: *The Legacy Punch List: PARTnership 4*

Pray and ask God to help you deeply desire to spend time with Him.

Remind attendees there are two gatherings left. If there is a meal at the final gathering make sure plans have been explained to the participants.

Gathering 4: The Legacy Punch List

Participants will have read *PARTnership 4: The Legacy Punch List*

1. Introductory Connection

Opening Prayer: pray that God will solidify the need to bring our family concerns to the One who created our family members.

This partnership is different from when we prayed through our homes. This one is a daily partnership, to be continually used.

Upfront pre-arranged “stool” chat: interview a few who daily seek God in reading Scripture and praying and ask them what that looks like to them personally each day. Stress that the *FPR Journal* is only one aspect of their time with God. Perhaps one of those who share can relate to using music, a reading through the Bible plan, going deeper in one book of the Bible using a study, or journaling.

Mention that Debbie urges us to meet with Jesus to listen to Him through Scripture and talk to Him through our prayers. However, she emphasizes we are not to beat ourselves up if something goes awry and if we happen to miss our time with God. It WILL happen...it happens to her at times. We are to take comfort in these words.

Let participants know that today there will be prayer time in the groups and there will be a five-minute signal before the end of their group time, due to the type of prayer activity.

2. Going Deeper Connection

For fifteen minutes discuss the highlight “take-aways” from this partnership.

In the remaining time the leader at each table will name the 31 topics, one-by-one and the group will pray for each one, aloud or silently. Prayers need to be brief. Remind them that there will be a five-minute signal.

3. Re-Group Connection

Remind each participant to bring food if you are incorporating food or dinner in the last gathering. Food could be shared with the entire group or each individual table. Come up with a plan that will work for your gathering. It is recommended that drinks be provided by the group leadership team.

End the group time, stating the importance of a daily time to meet with God – to listen to His Word and to bring concerns to Him.

Announce the last partnership, *PARTnership 5, Own It!* Challenge participants to come up with a plan to further what they have learned in *Family Prayer Ripples*. Tell them they will be deciding on how to maintain or enrich each partnership.

Send-off Prayer: ask Jesus to help them carve out the time with Him each day and to listen to what He says in His Word and to speak with Him in prayer. Pray that each participant will commit to own a plan to further what they have learned as they read and complete the last partnership.

Gathering 5: Own It!

Participants will have read and completed PARTnership 5: Own It!

1. Introductory Connection

Opening Welcome: hopefully all have decided how to Own It! Suggest that they find an accountability partner...it could be accountability via text, phone, coffee shop, etc. This could involve accountability with two or more - it could even be by table.

Opening in prayer, ask Jesus to help them not just to be dreamers, but doers.

2. Going Deeper Connection

Table discussion during meal: ask, "What are you going to do with what you have learned in your FPR Journal?"

3. Re-Group Connection

When most are eating dessert (if meal was part of the gathering), ask for a few people to share a portion of their "Own It!" plans. Suggestion: two minutes per speaker. End that time according to your schedule.

Before leaving, form a circle and commit to Jesus that you will continue to partner with Him in the area of your family and home.

Be sure to thank Jesus for ripples that will result from the commitments to become ripplemakers. Ask Jesus to help participants to have fresh eyes to see their family and homes and to never forget that they can lead a peaceful life as they partner with Him to make ripples for current and future family members.

Be sure to designate a meeting area for those who still would like to match up with an accountability partner.

Participants are encouraged to leave comments or questions about *Family Prayer Ripples: A Journal of Heart & Home* at familyprayerripples.com.