

A Simple Way to Teach Prayer in Small Groups

By Carol Madison



Dave and Marilyn Hansen like *Prayer Connect* magazine so much that they figured there must be a way to introduce it to their small group members. So they looked through past themes of the magazine and selected topics they believed most related to the interests of their group. They then prepared to launch into several months of using *Prayer Connect* as the study/discussion time during their meetings.

Taking a New Approach

The Hansens lead a small group comprised of members from both Calvary Community Church in Westlake, CA, and its church plant—Living Oaks Church in Newbury Park, CA. After their group finished a study of the Holy Spirit, they prayed specifically about what they should study next. Dave says it was a like a “bam” moment when the Holy Spirit confirmed to both of them that *Prayer Connect* was the next step.

They chose four issues of the magazine and ordered enough copies for each member of the group to have his/her own copy. The Hansens’ instructions were simple: Look through the magazines and pick an article you identify with—and then be prepared to facilitate a discussion. “We thought it was important for everyone to get a chance to lead,” says Dave.

The group immediately discovered they could discuss only one article per meeting because the topics prompt so much interaction.

“We especially like using *Prayer Connect* instead of a book study. It seems less daunting to have a magazine rather than a whole book on prayer because you have different writers with more of a worldview,” explains Marilyn. Dave adds, “We’re not just studying one person’s perspective on prayer. I got excited about all the different authors from different parts of the country and the Body of Christ.”

Group members come prepared with the designated article studied and highlighted, with questions marked. Then the facilitator guides the discussion by drawing attention to key points. “We do a quick overview of the article first,” explains Dave, “and then we go right into discussion. But we don’t ask what people think of the whole article. We highlight key paragraphs and Scripture passages.”

Using the Bible Study

Each issue also has a Bible study prepared by Sandra Higley, featuring additional Scripture passages and questions that complement the theme articles. To save time looking up all the Scripture passages, someone in the group volunteers to print out all the passages for the group. (Biblegateway.com is an online Bible that can help with this task.)

“There are so many Scriptures,” says Dave, “that we thought it was crucial for people to read through each one.” That way everyone is involved by taking turns reading the passages.

“When we were doing the *Prayer Connect* study on spiritual warfare, the group was excited to see how many verses in both the Old and New Testaments related to warfare and struggle,” adds Marilyn. “They [could] see God at work . . . throughout Scripture.”

Praying in Fresh Ways

The Hansens anticipate they may spend two years using just those four issues of *Prayer Connect*. They have found that the prayer times in their small group have also changed, as now the prayer flows more out of what they have just learned—as opposed to praying according to requests. The focus of their prayer is now on applying the biblical principles learned through the articles and their discussion.

Dave believes the timing is just right, as God is setting the foundation for changes and increased warfare coming soon to the Church. “God is bringing the Body of Christ together in prayer—and the magazine demonstrates that.”

Dave and Marilyn also find the magazine to be up to date with what is happening around the world and in the prayer movement. “The articles are always relevant, fresh, and new,” says Marilyn. “Yet the truth doesn’t change.”

Ordering for Your Group

There are two inexpensive ways to get issues of *Prayer Connect* for your small group. First, you can order copies for all your group members at 15 percent off the normal rate. Simply use the code that appears in the PrayerShop ad on page 4 of each issue.

As a second option, we now offer an ongoing multiple-copy automatic shipment product. You can sign up to receive ten copies (shipped to one address) of each issue of *Prayer Connect*. This is set up as a “recurring billing” product, which means your credit card will be automatically charged every two months. The price, including shipping in the U.S., is \$24.99—a \$99.96 savings over ten individual subscriptions. You can stop the service at any time.

Each issue also features an ad that describes the past issues, giving your group members an overview of the topics they might

like to study.

–CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.