

# formed

through prayer



A 5-WEEK SMALL GROUP STUDY



## **Week 1: Formed Through Prayer**

**Scripture:** Galatians 4:19 + Colossians 1:27 + Matthew 11:28–30

## **Week 2: Prayer**

**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16–17 + Exodus 33 + Hebrews 5:7

## **Week 3: Fasting**

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:14–17 + Psalm 63

## **Week 4: Scripture**

**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:10–17 + Psalm 1

## **Week 5: Silence + Solitude**

**Scripture:** Luke 5:16 + Mark 1:35 + Psalm 46

# Formed

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We are always being formed. The information we take in, the habits we live out, and the environments we inhabit all have formative power over us, shaping what we desire and who we are. If that's true, then it's not a matter of **if** we're being formed but **what** is forming us. We're either being shaped into the likeness of Jesus or transformed into something different. God's desire is to make us increasingly more like Jesus, transforming us each day by the power of his grace that is at work in us. We get to participate in this journey by following the examples and practices that Jesus lived out in His life, sometimes referred to as spiritual disciplines or rhythms.

These habits are not ways of forcing God to work, or building up our own righteousness. They keep us turned toward God and open to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. As these spiritual rhythms center us in Jesus and make us more like Him, they center us in the three relationships that Jesus lived in: relationship with God, the church, and the world.




In a 3-part series titled "Formed" we'll explore how these 3 relationships shape and form us and help keep us centered in Jesus.

## Formed Through Prayer

The first part of the Formed series will focus on deepening our relationship with God through prayer and Bible engagement. We'll learn about prayer, fasting, scripture and silence and solitude, as we consider how prayer can progress from an occasional practice into an integral way of life.

## Family Discipleship

You'll notice that some of the questions or applications have a  next to it. We've identified these questions/applications as good discussion starters or ways to continue the conversation with your kids as we seek to disciple our next generation.

# Checking In

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The following assessment is to help you reflect on the rhythms we will cover in this series, allowing you to reflect and gain insight into where you're at. Remember, this is a tool for self-reflection and growth and there are no right or wrong answers. We are all on this journey together, seeking God and continually being transformed to look more and more like Jesus.

**Instructions:** Read each statement and put a dot on the line that represents where you perceive yourself to be for each spiritual rhythm.

<b>Prayer:</b>	I struggle with prayer and/or don't pray.	_____	Prayer is a way of life for me.
<b>Fasting:</b>	I don't fast or think that I need to.	_____	I regularly fast to draw closer to God.
<b>Scripture:</b>	I don't really read the Bible.	_____	I read the Bible daily, using God's Word to transform me.
<b>Silence &amp; Solitude:</b>	My life is too busy and/or I don't see the need for silence & solitude.	_____	I regularly practice silence & solitude to spend time with God.

Choose one rhythm to focus on for the next five weeks and ask yourself: "What small step can I take towards aligning with the statement on the right?" Talk to someone in your small group or your leader if you need help. Remember, progress takes time and practice; give yourself grace and invite God into this process.

Over the next 5 weeks, I would like to focus on the rhythm of:

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# Week 1: Formed Through Prayer

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**Scripture:** Galatians 4:19 + Colossians 1:27 + Matthew 11:28–30

Through God's grace, He is actively shaping Christ's likeness within us daily. Engaging in Jesus' life rhythms provides us with an opportunity to actively participate in this transformative process. Let's look at how these rhythms, centered around prayer, serve as tools that help us along our journey toward becoming more like Christ.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. As you think about your relationship with God, which rhythm (prayer, fasting, scripture, silence + solitude) is easiest for you? Which one is the most difficult? Which one had you not considered as a way to draw closer to God?

2. Read Galatians 4:19 and Colossians 1:27.

- What stands out to you in these verses?

- How might understanding "Christ in you" affect the way we interact with others, both within the Church community and beyond?

3. Identify some of the habits, voices, influences, and environments that have formed you. How have they formed your identity, imagination, and/or dreams? Share one or two of these insights with your group. Consider which habit you could replace with a new habit, environment, or influence.

### **Application:**



Take the “Checking In” survey at the beginning of the booklet. Share with your group an insight you gained from the assessment and which rhythm you’re going to focus on over the next 5 weeks.

*(Parents - Talk to your kids about the assessment, be honest, and invite them to take it.)*

Discuss with your group how you, individually and/or as a group, will participate in the 21 Days of Prayer & Fasting.

### **Looking Ahead - Prayer:**

How would you define prayer? What, if anything, were you taught about prayer growing up? How has that changed?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Spend time praying for one another and the steps you identified taking through this Formed series.

# Week 2: Prayer

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**Scripture:** 1 Thessalonians 5:16–17 + Exodus 33 + Hebrews 5:7

Through prayer, we intimately encounter God and communicate with him. Prayer isn't merely an occasional task for Christians; rather, it embodies a continual lifestyle, an ongoing communion with God. This week we will look at how we can take small steps to deepen our prayer life.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. "Keep it real, keep it simple, keep it up" – is that how you would describe prayer? Is there anything from the sermon that stood out to you or that you hadn't considered before?

2. How do you view prayer? Is prayer a way of life for you? Explain. Do you feel guilt over lack of prayer? (Refer back to the checking in page at the beginning)

3. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17. Why did Paul write these verses to the church in Thessalonica? How does the concept of praying without ceasing resonate with you? How can we apply this in our busy lives?

4. Read Hebrews 5:7. How does this verse deepen our understanding of Jesus' prayers during His earthly life? What does it reveal about His relationship with God the Father?

### **Application:**



What practical step can you take to “keep it real, keep it simple, keep it up”, using Jesus' example in Hebrews 5:7?

*(Parents – Ask your kids how they view prayer. Share & discuss the idea of “keep it real, keep it simple, keep it up”)*



Attend the Night of Worship as a group or with your family on January 21st at 6P .

### **Looking Ahead - Fasting:**

Do you think there is significance and purpose in fasting? Explain.

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Spend time praying for the 3630 – Imago Dei Community Church, FCA Fitness, and launching the Prosser campus, as well as anyone in your own life that you are reaching out to that doesn't know Jesus.

# Week 3: Fasting

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**Scripture:** Matthew 9:14–17 + Psalm 63

Why would anyone willingly abstain from eating except for weight loss or competition? In biblical times, fasting served as a way to draw nearer to God—feeling His presence, hearing His voice, and seeking His guidance. By intentionally giving up food, they made room to hunger for God and receive His spiritual nourishment. In what might be a surprise to us, Jesus expected His disciples to embrace and practice fasting after his departure. This week we will look at how fasting allows our souls to crave more of God.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Have you ever practiced fasting from something before? If so, what was your experience like? If not, what are your thoughts or hesitations about fasting?

2. Read either Matthew 9:14–17 or Psalm 63 and answer the following questions:

- What stands out to you from the text?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How do you interpret these verses?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How does the passage apply to us today, and how should we respond?

3. Explain how fasting relates to prayer. What should our motivation be for fasting? How can we ensure our intentions remain sincere and focused on drawing closer to God, rather than for other reasons?

### **Application:**



What would it look like for you to take the next step in fasting? If you can't fast from food, what is something that you "can't live without" that you could give up for a time to deepen your connection with God?  
*(Parents - Talk to your kids about what they can't live without. Be curious about what they shared and explore their love and reliance on their answer.)*



Attend the prayer walk on January 27th from 10-11A at the Richland Campus. ***Please note that this date is different than what is in the booklet; the 27th is the correct date***

Attend the Town Hall as a group on January 28th at 5P.

### **Looking Ahead - Scripture:**

Do you read the Bible? What does that look like? Does your Bible reading help you encounter God? Explain.

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Spend time praying for the Bethel elders, leaders, staff, and volunteers.

# Week 4: Scripture

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**Scripture:** 2 Timothy 3:10–17 + Psalm 1

In a world where consuming vast amounts of content is a way of life, we may want to stop and ask: how much of this content truly helps us flourish as followers of Jesus? The Bible is unlike any other media available to us. When we approach it with faith, we encounter the living God within its words, experiencing transformation that shapes us from within. This week we will look at how Scripture is an important part of our prayer life.

## Discussion Questions:



1. We have created habits of consuming mass amounts of content, but a lot of that content may not be helping us flourish as disciples of Jesus. Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

*(Parents - Talk to your kids about the amount and type of content they consume.)*

2. Why was scripture included in our series on prayer? Explain.

3. Read Psalm 1. Compare the ways of the happy with the ways of the wicked. What does it look like practically to meditate on the Lord's instruction?

4. Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Summarize verses 15-17. How is the Bible God's living word to us, a gift that perfects us?

### **Application:**



How can you read the Bible differently based on what Adam shared?  
*(Parents - Talk to your kids about why you read the Bible and what reading it means to you.)*



What specific steps can you take to deepen your commitment to God's Word?

Pick one Saturday to attend the Saturday night prayer at 5:30P as a group.

### **Looking Ahead - Silence + Solitude:**

How do you personally view silence and solitude? What does that currently look like in your own life?

### **Prayer Prompt:**

Spend time praying Scripture together.

# Week 5: Silence + Solitude

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**Scripture:** Luke 5:16 + Mark 1:35 + Psalm 46

In a world filled with constant noise, distractions, and overwhelming busyness, cultivating a meaningful spiritual life seems challenging. Although the 1st century differed greatly from our modern times, chaos still existed. Within the Gospel narratives, we witness Jesus purposefully seeking solitary places to be with His Father. This deliberate practice, amid the chaos of life, serves as a rhythm we need to recover to flourish spiritually in our fast-paced world. Let's look at how Jesus modeled silence and solitude for us.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. Is silence and solitude, as Adam explained, easy or difficult for you? Why?



2. How does our culture view silence and solitude? How might societal norms influence our acceptance or rejection of these practices?  
*(Parents - Talk to your kids about silence and solitude.)*



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