

Group Leader's Guide

For

"I Will Give You Rest"

By Edward Kurath

We want to affirm you in your personal journey of inner healing and in your desire to facilitate others in that journey using the "I Will Give You Rest" book, workbooks, and video materials. Be assured that the Lord will lead you on this journey, and we want to help to equip you to follow His leading as you reach out to others. He loves all of them and wants them to be set free.

For people to be transformed into the image of Jesus, the "head knowledge" obtained from the book and videos must be personally applied to one's life – a "spiritual process" that occurs through prayer.

Why Have A Group?

It is much more difficult for a person to apply this in isolation. Transformation is a daily process, and often people need the encouragement and accountability of other people. Without the support of a group, it is very difficult to persevere and to stay on track.

There are several reasons why working on our healing in a group enhances the process:

1. Scripture encourages us to gather together and pray for one another. There is an empowering dynamic that exists when we do this:
 - a. "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20, NKJV).
 - b. "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed." (James 5:16, NAS).
2. Most of us need the encouragement of, and accountability to, other people to continue to diligently pray as we need to. Our healing is a process, and by ourselves it is too easy to let it fall by the wayside.
3. We can be blind to our own issues, and so we sometimes need the insight of others to help us see our own roots.
4. It is an encouragement to us to witness the healing of others in the group.

The purpose of this manual is to help you to facilitate an effective group where transformation can occur.

There needs to be two steps to the process.

1. **First**, the students need to become familiar with the Lord's way of healing. This is accomplished by first watching the videos and discussing them, and then using the book and Study Guide to further review and study the principles.
2. **Second**, the students need to apply what they have learned to their own lives. Meeting with other students to pray for each other is very helpful in accomplishing this.

The long term goal is that the students will be able to apply the blood of Jesus to their own lives for the rest of their lives. Some of them may also become inspired to begin to conduct their own groups in the future.

Schedule

Since the purpose of the group is to bring about healing, it helps the process if the students quickly reach a place where they can begin to pray for one another. Therefore, I would recommend that the **sequence** of chapters be altered to more quickly equip the group members to be able to pray for one another effectually.

Other Challenges:

There are some challenges that need to be overcome for people to truly receive healing in the meetings.

Usually the groups meet on weekday nights. This being the case, people have a limited amount of time and energy on any given night. The suggested schedule allows for a shorter meeting without compromising the effectiveness of each meeting.

There is a major mindset change between watching the video and discussing it (an intellectual process that occurs in **our head**), and listening to the Lord and praying (a spiritual process that occurs **inside us**). If an attempt is made to do both the teaching and prayer on the same night, I have found that it is very difficult for people to make this mindset change, and usually it is the prayer time that suffers.

The following suggested schedule also enhances the group prayer since people have time to digest a particular teaching and to apply it to their own lives for a week before they gather for the next prayer time.

In order for the prayer times to stay focused on their purpose, it needs to be clearly understood that when people come for the prayer time, that it is for prayer, not for study.

This schedule can also make the meetings more flexible: people who aren't ready to be vulnerable to a group can still come to the teaching nights only. Those who come to the prayer time have committed to the process, and know what to expect on the group prayer nights.

Suggested Pattern

- Watch a teaching video and then discuss the topic.
- During the following seven days, each person applies the teaching of the video to their own life, using the Study Aid as a guide.
- The next week, pray for one another in a small group.
- The next meeting after the prayer week, watch the next teaching video and then discuss the topic.
- Repeat this pattern of watching a teaching video followed by a week of personal application and reflection in preparation for the prayer time.

You will note that for the first three weeks there are no prayer times interspersed. The reason for this is that the students need to get some basic information before they will be able to know how to pray in the fourth week.

One note of caution: Sometimes people tend to skip doing the Application Questions for Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 the week following each teaching, and to then cram them all in after the teaching of Chapter 5; because a prayer week is coming up. Try to warn them of this temptation, and encourage them to do the questions each week after a chapter is taught. The teachings will benefit them much more if they will do this.

Suggested Schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Agenda</u>	<u>Assignment</u>
1	Watch Chapters 2 & 3	Study Guide questions Begin Life History Form
2.	Watch Chapter 4	Study Guide questions
3	Watch Chapter 5	Study Guide questions How to Forgive
4.	Prayer	
5.	Watch Chapter 11	Study Guide questions Listen to Every Negative Emotion
6.	Prayer	
7.	Watch Chapter 9	Study Guide questions
8.	Prayer	
9.	Watch Chapter 7	Study Guide questions
10.	Prayer	
11.	Watch Chapter 10	Study Guide questions
12.	Prayer	
13.	Watch Chapters 12 & 13	Study Guide questions Read Chapter 16 (there is no video)
14.	Prayer	
15.	Watch Chapter 6 Discuss Chapter 16	Study Guide questions
16.	Prayer	
17.	Watch Chapters 14 & 15	Study Guide questions People pray about being prayed for Next prayer time, as discussed in Chapter 15.
18.	Prayer – try Inner Child Prayer	
19.	Watch Chapters 8 & 18	Study Guide questions
20.	Prayer	
21.	Watch Chapter 17 and discuss “what next?”	

There are several possibilities for **“What next?”**

- Continue to meet and pray for each other – our transformation is a lifelong process, and the group can facilitate this.
- Start over by adding new students and hopefully using current members as prayer group leaders.
- Current prayer group participants start their own new groups.

Prayer Group Meetings for **“I Will Give You Rest”**

In addition to the teaching segment, we are providing this “how-to” guide to address topics related to facilitating a prayer group that desires to apply the teachings of the “I Will Give You Rest.”

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much” (James 5:16 NAS).

Encouragement

The first thing we would like you to remember is that the Lord is the healer. You as the facilitator are primarily along for the ride. You do have a part to play; but as long as the focus is on Jesus and His presence, and the environment is safe, the group will become successful. Therefore, please do not become anxious about the guidelines we will be suggesting.

I. Organization of the Prayer Group

Formation: There is no set rule as to how group members should be chosen. Pray about it and follow the Lord’s leading. The Lord knows each person intimately, and He knows the group dynamic He wants to promote. These are things we probably can’t know. For instance, sometimes couples should be split up, and sometimes not. Sometimes people of the same sex should be in the same group, and sometimes not. Sometimes good friends should be in separate groups, and sometimes not. Sometimes people of the same generation should be together, and sometimes not.

One guideline that should probably be followed is that people who are known to be antagonistic towards each other should not be in the same group. Otherwise their hostility will delay or eliminate the possibility of safety developing in the group.

For example, a married couple who are in strife with each other should be in separate groups.

Attendance: Generally, the prayer group membership should be permanent. Movement of people into or out of the group once it has begun to function interferes with the group dynamic and sense of safety, and this could delay the maturation and effectiveness of the group. Each person needs to commit to doing their best to come every time the group meets. Obviously, unforeseen and sporadic problems need to be understood, and could be an opportunity for the other group members to pray for the absent one. If a person does not feel that he or she can make this commitment to the group, he or she can still come to the teaching weeks, but should not be a member of a prayer group. As a prayer group facilitator, if you have to miss a prayer group meeting, try to identify another group member who can facilitate that meeting. Plan ahead if possible.

Size: One group should generally be no more than eight people. If the group gets bigger than this, people may be reluctant to share. In addition, more people can limit the amount of prayer time each person can receive. Divide in smaller groups if you have more than eight.

Leader: Each group should have a Facilitator who is familiar with the teachings, and thus the assignments and how to pray. If the first time through the teachings you are the only person who knows the material well enough to be able to lead a prayer group, then the first time you do the group teaching you should limit the prayer time to one group, which you will facilitate. Hopefully, after the first time through the teachings and prayer time, some other members of the prayer group will also be able, and motivated, to facilitate in the future.

Confidentiality: Everything shared in the group needs to be confidential. Every group member needs to agree to this.

The only exception would be if spouses are in separate groups. In this situation, they can share their experiences in their own group with each other, IF the other can be trusted not to tell other people the confidential information. If the spouse cannot be trusted, then he or she must not share confidential information. The reason for this exception is that it would not be a good thing if participation in the prayer group would build a wall between husband and wife.

II. Safety in the Prayer Group

The foundation of a prayer group is SAFETY. If the group is a safe place, and Jesus is the focus, the group will become successful. Lack of safety, respect, love, and concern is what wounded most people. Because of prior unsafe experiences, many have developed automatic defenses that will rise up when they sense a lack of safety. Feeling safe is the only way that people will reach the place where they are willing to share the deep secrets of their lives.

Down deep, every human desires to be heard and respected, and their Treasure Inside craves to have deep relationships with other people. The fact that a person has decided to participate in the prayer group says that he or she consciously wants healing. However, our defense mechanisms are subconscious, and we don't have conscious control over their operation. Those who have been more deeply wounded may take longer to begin to share at a deep level.

Experiencing and observing love and acceptance being displayed in the group is the only way to keep the defense mechanisms from triggering a shut down. As the group matures and healing occurs, the defense mechanisms will be eliminated. Then the person will be able to be open whenever he or she senses a safe person, or to stay private when safety is not present.

As the Facilitator, realize that the sense of trust and safety takes time to develop. Be patient with others and yourself. To begin with, most of the group members either don't know each other, or have probably never experienced that depth of relationship with other people. They first need to become comfortable with the others in the prayer group.

Consider being the first one to share, to break the ice. Your application of the teachings to your own life will model for others what the homework was about, and how to pray about it in the group. Seeing that you are a safe and nonjudgmental person, yet a sinner like they are, will encourage them to risk sharing their own experience and to be prayed for.

Also be aware that people in our culture are not accustomed to sharing their feelings and problems with others in a group. This cultural hurdle is one reason why small groups in American churches have not been very successful. This is also one reason why people feel more comfortable when they are in their head than sharing from deep inside. Because of this, as the Facilitator, from time to time you may need to bring the group back to praying. One of the most effective ways of doing that is to ask them to become quiet and to then listen inside.

III. Sharing/Praying in the Prayer Group

Preparing to Pray: Be sure your group members understand that the sharing/praying time is for sharing struggles and for praying – for communing in the spirit realm, with the Lord and with your Treasures Inside. The prayer time is for applying to your lives what was taught the previous weeks. The teaching week is the place to ask questions and to discuss the lessons.

Unless this distinction is made clear and adhered to, the prayer times can easily become times of visiting and discussion and giving of advice – of communing head to head. If the time is spent in your heads, no healing will occur. From time to time you, as the facilitator, may need to bring the group back to reflection if they get into their heads in this way. In our culture we tend to feel uncomfortable with quiet moments, and tend to fill the quiet with words.

This distinction is why we recommend that alternate weeks be dedicated to prayer. Without this clear separation, it is quite likely that the group will not spend much time actually praying. This way the prayer group members come to the prayer time prepared and knowing what the focus will be.

To prepare for prayer, start out with a time for quieting that will help transition members from the cares of the day to focusing inside on the Holy Spirit. Times of quiet are important. If a person is listening for the voice of the Lord, or their Treasure Inside, there needs to be quiet. They may have to close their eyes and sit for awhile to hear what is coming up from inside. Open eyes can bring outside stimulation that pops a person back into their head. Words spoken at the wrong time can do this same thing. The only way to know when it is appropriate to speak is to listen to the Holy Spirit, Who is directing the prayer time. Encourage everyone to let quiet times occur. It is an essential part of listening, because the healing that the Lord wants to bring about occurs inside.

Sharing/praying: Encourage everyone to come to the prayer meeting with an open mind rather than an agenda. That way the Lord can be free to do whatever He wants to accomplish. We can't know what that is ahead of time.

One good way to start the prayer time that opens the door for the Lord and his agenda is to ask people to take turns telling Jesus one thing they like about Him. This can get the ball rolling in a spirit of praise.

Another way to pray is to simply be quiet and wait for the Lord to speak to someone. Hopefully, the group members will have been spending the previous week prayerfully applying the prior teaching to their own lives, and the Lord may have greatly stirred certain people to share. Those people will usually be the place to start. If nobody jumps out, then you might have each person read one event from their list of issues that came up during the prior week, and pray with them.

There are many ways to pray, and the group needs to be open and available to proceeding as the Lord leads. This may be dynamic and sometimes maybe even surprising. It is important that the Facilitator not come to the meeting with a fixed agenda, but rather come with a listening ear. It is not possible to know ahead of time what the Lord has been doing in the lives of the individuals between prayer meetings. Take what the Lord presents.

When the group is new, respect those who do not yet feel free to share. They may have wounds that make them very cautious. As they grow in their sense of safety, they will usually eventually begin to share. If they don't ever get around to sharing, this is likely a perfect thing to pray with them about. If they never get around to bringing their issues to the group, they will not get prayer, and probably not be healed.

Each person is different. If an individual doesn't ever get around to sharing, you may eventually need to draw them out. Likewise, try not to let the same one or two people dominate every meeting. If this tends to happen, then these people are not being empathetic with others in the group. This is likely a sign of a wound in them. Again, this may be a perfect thing to pray with them about.

Each person should work at becoming an active listener. People know when they are being heard, and that can be a very healing thing for them. Some people have never been listened to or understood.

Celebrate when a person has a breakthrough. Observing one member's breakthrough can be enormously encouraging to other members.

On the other hand, when a member is discouraged, first listen to him or her. Then help the person to process this.

Jesus is Present: If Jesus was physically in the room with the group, His presence would undoubtedly dominate the attention of the members; and they would likely spend most of their time addressing Him directly. Though He is not present physically, if we invite Him to be there, He promises to be with us." *For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them*" (Matthew 18:20, NKJV). Therefore, you can cultivate that awareness, and encourage people to address Jesus directly and not so much each other by saying, "Can you tell Jesus that?", or "What is Jesus doing?"

One goal that is very productive for inner healing is to eventually move to the type of prayer discussed in Chapter 15 of my book. Because of the trust required between a person and his or her Treasure Inside, it may take some time for this to begin to work. Be patient. Try it from time to time with willing members. When a person is able to see the Lord and hear what He is doing and saying, miraculous things happen.

Whenever a person is praying, it is helpful if he or she will speak slowly and loudly enough so that others can know what they are praying, or what the Lord is

showing them. This is especially true with Chapter 15 type prayer. If a person is seeing the Lord, it will help the group if the one seeing the vision will verbalize what is going on as it is happening.

If at any time other group members sense something, or see something in the spiritual realm, it is important that he or she be sensitive as to what to share with the group, and when.

Summary

Therefore, the primary assignment for the Facilitator is to promote an environment where James 5:16 can happen. Each group member needs to be encouraged to personally interact directly with the Lord, to receive healing from Him; and to “pray for one another.”

IV. Follow through

The most straightforward assignment for members is to listen to every negative emotion and pray as best they can (see the assignment to do this in the Instruction Manual). After the teaching of Chapter 11 on emotions, everyone should be doing this constantly. Then the members should bring their list of experiences to the group meeting, and have the group pray about anything for which they were not able to get to a place of peace.

It is very important that the members apply the teachings to their own lives between prayer meetings. Applying the blood of Jesus to their own lives is the only thing that will bring healing to them.

In addition, one of the objectives of the prayer group and the assignments is to prepare people to be able to personally process their own issues with the Lord outside the group. The group will likely not be there for the rest of their lives, but they will need the Lord to be their healer for the rest of their days on this earth.

V. Facilitator Encouragement

It will take a load off your shoulders if you can truly come to realize that the Lord is in charge. You can't make any healing happen. Know that the Lord Jesus Christ is heavily invested in each person's life, and He is the only One that can bring healing to them. So just be listening to His leading and follow Him. Hopefully, each person in the group will be doing this, and the Lord will fill in the gaps by directing them. Accept that in the Kingdom of God, everybody is of equal importance and “rank.” He loves each person equally, and has a plan for each one's life.

At the same time, He has given each person unique gifts. As time goes by, it will become evident to the group – what gifts and talents God has placed in each person's Treasure Inside. Some people have no idea that they have gifts, or what are those gifts. Part of the journey of healing is for each person to get to know and to love their own Treasure Inside, and to celebrate who God made them to be. The other group members may have to help them to identify and embrace and celebrate those gifts and talents.