



# *Unexpected Joy*

## **Facilitator Guide**

**Part 2 (Weeks 2-3)**

**Week 2: pg 5 | Week 3: pg 7**

### **12 TIPS TO MAKE WEEKS TWO - CLOSING YOUR BEST WEEKS**

Whether your group has gotten off to a great start or you are still trying to pull the group together, here are twelve suggestions to see your group growing stronger and stronger all the way through to the closing week. Read through these and determine which of these will be most essential for your group's health and then apply it to your group.

### **PRIORITIZE YOUR SERVE OPPORTUNITY**

The Community Serve Opportunity is an essential component of this study for all groups! Make this a priority for your group and start your planning early. See pages 50-51 in the workbook and download the suggested list from Facilitator Resource section at the bottom of <http://purposechurch.com/unexpectedjoy>. The purpose of the Serve Experience is BEING, more than doing. Choose an opportunity that will be highly relational as you serve the poor, disadvantaged or marginalized from our community. The best project for your group will be one that will be a new experience for most of your group members that will allow them to talk to, interact with, and listen to those you are serving. Allow someone else in your group to use their gifts by asking them to be your group Serve Opportunity Coordinator.

### **CONNECT BETWEEN MEETINGS**

The contact your group members have between meetings is just as important as your time together in your meeting. Each group will have its own ways to connect. Here are some suggestions:

- Encourage people to sit or serve together on Sunday mornings.
- Use email, texting, Facebook or other tools to communicate prayer requests and updates.
- Make plans to grab coffee or a meal with group members that you don't know as well.
- Plan informal social activities or events.
- Ask other group members to take the lead in these things rather than trying to do it yourself!

## **BE INTENTIONAL TO MAKE NEWCOMERS FEEL LIKE “INSIDERS”**

Whenever you have new people joining with a group that has already been meeting you will need to be very intentional each week to make your newcomers feel like “insiders” rather than “outsiders” in your group. Here are some ways you can do this:

- Learn names: Play the “Name Game” to help everyone learn each other’s names. The new people have a lot of names to learn. The Name Game is simple. Go first and intro yourself with your first name (what you want to be called) and a food you like that starts with the same letter. Example: I am “Gregg and I like goulash.” Then the next person goes and repeats yours and their own. The next does the first two and their own. And so on around the circle until it comes back to you. Then have everyone cover their name tags (if you have them) and see if you can go around the circle and recite everyone.
- Spend extra time with the “Question of the Day” for your group. Go around the circle and have everyone share to get everyone talking. You can also replace the question of the day with questions like:
- Share how and when you came to Purpose Church and what you have been involved in since you came.
- **Share Two Truths and a Lie:** This is a safe way for everyone to get to know each other and everyone gets to talk around the circle. Each person takes a moment to write down three statements about him or herself--two that are true and one that is not. Then go around and take turns reading the three statements and have the group guess which one is false before they reveal it.
- **Share Your Stories**  
One of the aspects of Rooted that bonds groups so closely is the sharing of our life stories/ testimonies. If your group has never done this or has added people to your group since you last shared stories, start with yourself and then alternate asking new and old members to share a brief version or part of their stories. Try to have one person share each week.
- **Keep Group Discussion, Sharing, and Prayer Safe**  
As you gently encourage everyone to share, be sure that you create safe space for people to be real and say “I didn’t understand” or “I had trouble with that part”. Also be careful not to call on anyone to read or pray out loud until you know they are comfortable with that.
- **Eliminate Insider talk about Community Serve Project**  
When you discuss plans for your Community Serve Project be sure to share any group history with projects and ask newcomers about ideas or experiences they might have had.

## **EMPHASIZE PERSONAL STUDY**

Each week make sure you are having everyone open up their books to the SOAP pages and sharing from it. If they haven’t written on the pages don’t call them out but invite them to write something during your discussion and share it. If anyone seems to be struggling with it or confused by it take some time one on one to encourage or help them.

## **MAKE PRAYER A PRIORITY**

Make it a goal for your group to grow in your experience of prayer together. Here are some suggestions:

- Encourage each person to write out a simple prayer on the “P” page each week and to just practice responding to God in that way and not to be concerned with how it sounds.
- Have two “prayer times each week”  
Encourage each person to read or express their prayer out loud at the conclusion of your SOAP discussion.

Share prayer requests (try to keep them more personal) and have everyone write them on the prayer request pages in the back of the book (pg. 108). Try to keep the sharing of requests brief so that you have time to pray.

- When someone shares a significant victory or burden with the group, instead of waiting till “prayer time” stop right then and have someone pray for them or gather around them to pray over them.
- Encourage everyone to pray for these requests throughout the week and to give updates, answers and new requests between meetings by text, email, messaging, etc.

## **KEEP IT FRESH—CHANGE IT UP**

As you go through the weeks it is easy to get in ruts. Here are some suggestions to help you keep it fresh:

- If everyone always sits in the same place every week. Change it up one week.
- Instead of the Question of the Day you can have everyone share “Peaks & Pits”. Share one highpoint and one lowpoint from the past week.
- Share prayer request and updates at the beginning instead of the end.

## **GIVE OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP AWAY**

The long term health and growth of a group will depend on how much the leadership and ownership of the group is shared. If your group is dependent on you for initiating most aspects of the group life it is vital that you start giving aspects away to other group members. Here are few suggestions to get you started:

- Set aside some time to pray over your group members to ask God to reveal to you gifts that group members have and the invitations you should give to step into roles in your group:
- If you are always hosting the group, consider asking someone else to share in hosting.
- Invite other group members to facilitate parts of your meetings: (Question of the Day, One aspect of SOAP sharing, prayer time, etc.)
- Prepare a group member to facilitate the group when you are not able to be there (illness, away, etc.)
- We will be introducing our Groups Data Program for you to keep your group roster updated and keep attendance, etc. Ask someone in your group to take responsibility for this.
- Snacks, coffee, etc. coordinator
- Community Serve Opportunity Coordinator
- Group fun or activity coordinator

## **REMIND EVERYONE OF THE COVENANT**

As you add people to your group or go through the study consider times to remind the group of the commitments you are making to each other so that everyone can get the most out of the group experience.

## **CELEBRATE WHAT GOD IS DOING**

We have added a closing week to this study so that you can take time to reflect and celebrate all that God has done during the series. Make it a priority to celebrate at the end but you don’t have to wait till the end. Take moments to stop and celebrate what God is doing in your group members and your group time throughout the series.

## **KEEP YOUR GROUP DISCUSSION HEALTHY**

See the specific suggestions that are given for each week on the following pages. In addition, here are 10 General DOs and DON'Ts for Facilitating Healthy Group Discussions:

Insert the 10 from page 16 of Part 1]

## **TEN DOs & DON'Ts FOR FACILITATING YOUR GROUP EFFECTIVELY**

1. DON'T be afraid of silence. Silence allows people the time to process their thoughts and feelings and to share more deeply.
2. DON'T fall into the trap of "teaching." Once you fall into this trap group members become "students" and the group loses the opportunity to grow through hearing one another's insights and stories.
3. DON'T be satisfied with the first responses given. Keep probing for deeper responses.
4. DON'T allow someone to hijack or dominate the sharing or discussion. When you do this other group members will shut down, stop participating or even stop coming to the group.
5. DON'T allow the sharing or discussion to get side tracked. Focus the group and the sharing back on track so that you can go deeper together.
6. DO remember that your primary role is to listen to group members as they respond to God's Word and shepherd them as they take their next step of growth.
7. DO share with authentic vulnerability what God is revealing to you, especially when you are struggling.
8. DO help group members move to personal application instead of only making conceptual observations.
9. DO wrestle with the unresolved issues of life together. By doing this instead of just feeding "right" answers your group will experience more life impact.
10. DO generate dialogue between the group members. Don't become the focal point of the group.

### **KEEP THE END IN SIGHT**

The goal is not for your group to complete a book or to complete ten meetings together. The goal is seeing all our lives transformed as we open up God's living Word together and open up our lives to each other. Spend time praying what would you like to see God doing in each group member's life and what would you like to see happening in the group at the end of the ten weeks. Be thinking about what the group or group members will do after the 10 weeks:

- Have your group members completed Rooted yet? If not begin encouraging them to do that individually or together as a next step.
- Will you be able to continue as a group during the next season? Who will facilitate? What will you study? Etc.

### **USE THE ADDED RESOURCES**

#### **• Additional Discussion Questions**

If you follow the above tips you should not need any additional discussion questions. Nevertheless, we have provided additional questions for each week to use. These might be most useful for Sunday morning classes or groups that have members who are in two different groups for the study.

- **Sermons Online**

If you or anyone in your group misses any of the sermons from the series they will be made available on the Unexpected Joy web page (for Pomona) and <http://purposeclaremont.com> (for Claremont)

- **Dr. Carl's Commentaries**

As an added bonus for facilitators Dr. Carl Toney is recording a brief video for each week in addition to the Understanding Philippians section. He will record this on the Sunday that passage is preached and we will email them out each week and we hope to be able to start posting them on the Unexpected Joy page with the sermons. Contact us if you need help in accessing these.

- **Right Now Media**

Again, there is no need for you to spend time searching this unless you have extra time and would like to. Every group and every individual at Purpose Church now has access to 100's of Bible Study videos through Right Now Media. There are studies and resources available for Philippians you could use as a supplement. One group used The Bible Project 's brief video that gives an Overview of the book of Philippians. Let us know if you need help accessing Right Now Media.

## **BETWEEN WEEK ONE AND WEEK TWO**

The contact you have between meetings is just as important as your time together in your meeting. Be sure to contact anyone who missed Week One so that you catch them up on the SOAP Study Method. Encourage them to go on [purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy](http://purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy) and to watch the SOAP Intro video to get caught up. Also find ways to check in with all who were there to build communication outside of your meeting time and to let them know they are valued in the group.

## **PREPARING FOR WEEK TWO MEETING**

- Read through this guide and pages 30-39 of the workbook to familiarize yourself and plan for your group time.
- Meditate on the theme of IN CHAINS (Philippians 1:13-14) and how you will carry that through your discussion.
- Review your sermon notes or watch the sermon online if you missed it.
- Be sure to have extra books for anyone who might not have gotten one

## **WEEK TWO MEETING (PAGE 39)**

### **Question of the Day**

If your group "already knows each other" you might be tempted to skip past this. We strongly encourage you to begin your time with this question or one that you substitute to get EVERYONE talking and learning more and more about each group member. This will also help everyone to engage with the theme for the week.

Alternate question: When you have had a bad day, what do you usually do?

### **Review from first three weeks**

If you have people joining you that missed the previous week(s), be intentional

### **2. Understanding Philippians (page 32)**

Before you get to the SOAP sharing, you may want to read through the Understanding Philippians section on page 32 out loud together and then ask:

- What did you find most helpful to your understanding of this passage?

- Make sure the majority of your time is spent on sharing from SOAP (#3 below). If you have time and feel you need more material for your group to discuss, you can select from the Additional Discussion Questions below.

### **Sharing from the Sermon**

Ask everyone to turn to their sermon notes and take a moment to share: What is one thing that stood out to you from the sermon? Be prepared to share something to get it started.

### **3. SOAP Discussion**

This is the heart of your group time each week. For most groups this is all you will have time to do. For your SOAP study discussion we recommend:

- Re-read the passage out loud together
- Go around and have everyone share their “S” and “O”. S = Share which verse(s) stood out to you. O = What was it that led them to select that verse and what were some of the observations they had about the verse.
- Next have everyone (or as many as possible) share their “A”. A = what are the specific applications from this verse?
- Finally tell everyone that you will have a time for prayer requests later but now just ask people to simply speak or read out loud their “P”. Emphasize that although it is natural to be concerned how it sounds, this is simply time to express to God our response to what He has been showing us through the study and not to worry about how it sounds.

### **Additional Discussion Questions**

Don't feel like you need to use any of these. Make SOAP the priority for your sharing and discussion. You do not even need to look at these unless you feel like your group needs additional questions to discuss:

- Read the 1st paragraph of Understanding Philipppians (pg. 32)
- How was Paul's ministry affected by his bondage?
- How does Paul decide if a circumstance (like his being in chains) is good or bad? How can his example encourage or inspire us?
- What is Paul's overriding attitude toward his uncertain future (v.21)?
- For me to live is \_\_\_\_? If someone were to look at how you spent your time and money this past week or month how would they fill in this
- Read the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of Understanding Philipppians (pg. 32).  
What is the difference between Paul's view of joy and the views of other philosophies from that same time period: the Stoics (grin and bear it) and the Epicureans (eat, drink and be merry)?
- What conduct is worthy of the Gospel (v. 27)?
- In what ways has your faith in Jesus Christ made a difference in your:
  - experience of joy in the midst of suffering?
  - attitude toward death and dying?

### **Closing time**

- Take a moment to introduce the Community Serve Opportunity (pages 50-51) and make plans to discuss it next week.
- As you open up for requests let the group know that you want to be praying for people outside the group but try to keep the requests brief and focused on people or situations you are personally connected with. Turn together to page 108 and begin recording your group's requests and answers each week. See #5 of the “12 Tips” section for ideas for growing your

prayer time.

- Discuss any other important group matters like snacks :)

## **BETWEEN WEEK TWO AND WEEK THREE**

Continue to build communication between meetings. Share prayer requests and updates by text or email. Make a phone contact to anyone who missed your last meeting and let them know how much they are missed. Reflect on what was shared during your time together and let people know in a personal way how much they mean to the group.

## **PREPARING FOR WEEK THREE MEETING**

- Read through this guide and pages 40-49 of the workbook to familiarize yourself and plan for your group time.
- If someone is joining your group this week, be sure to have a book for them and be intentional about how you can best welcome them and make them feel like an “insider”.
- Meditate on the theme of IN CHAINS (Philippians 1:13-14) and how you will carry that through your discussion.
- Review your sermon notes or watch the sermon online if you missed it.
- Print out the list of Community Serve Opportunities from the Facilitator Resources section of <http://purposechurch.com/UnexpectedJoy>. Determine how you want to begin planning for your group (see pages 50-51). Consider asking someone else in the group to take the lead on coordinating this.

## **WEEK THREE MEETING (page 49)**

### **Question of the Day**

#### **Alternate questions:**

- Who is the “poster child” for humility in your life? Why?
- Who does the “dirty jobs” in your household?

### **3. Understanding Philippians**

Before you get to the SOAP sharing, you may want to read through the Understanding Philippians section on page 42 out loud together and then ask:

- What did you find most helpful to your understanding of this passage?
- Make sure the majority of your time is spent on sharing from SOAP (#3 below). If you have time and feel you need more material for your group to discuss, you can select from the Sharing from the Sermon and Additional Discussion Questions below.

### **Sharing from the Sermon**

Ask everyone to turn to their sermon notes and take a moment to share: What is one thing that stood out to you from the sermon? Be prepared to share something to get it started.

### **3. SOAP Discussion**

This is the heart of your group time each week. For most groups this is all you will have time to do. For your SOAP study discussion we recommend:

- Re-read the passage out loud together
- Go around and have everyone share their “S” and “O”. S = Share which verse(s) stood out to you. O = What was it that led them to select that verse and what were some of the observations they had about the verse.
- Next have everyone (or as many as possible) share their “A”. A = what are the specific applications from this verse?

- Finally tell everyone that you will have a time for prayer requests later but now just ask people to simply speak or read out loud their “P”. Emphasize that although it is natural to be concerned how it sounds, this is simply time to express to God our response to what He has been showing us through the study and not to worry about how it sounds.

### **Additional Discussion Questions**

Don't feel like you need to use any of these. Make SOAP the priority for your sharing and discussion. You do not even need to look at these unless you feel like your group needs additional questions to discuss. You can read through them to see if there are one or two that would help your group sharing and discussion :

- Reading between the lines of this passage. What might have been wrong with the church in Philippi?
- What does it mean to consider someone “better than yourself” (v. 3)?
- How does humility differ from being a “doormat”?
- Who do you admire because they truly put the interest of others ahead of their own interests?
- When are the times in your life when you have been a part of a group or community that cared for one another the way Paul describes here?
- In light of verses 1-4 what does it mean to “work out your salvation” (v.12)?
- What makes God's people “shine like stars”?

### **Closing time**

- As you open up for requests let the group know that you want to be praying for people outside the group but try to keep the requests brief and focused on people or situations you are personally connected with. Turn together to page 108 and begin recording your group's requests and answers each week. See #5 in the “12 Tips” section for ideas for growing your prayer time.
- Start planning or confirming your COMMUNITY SERVE OPPORTUNITY!