

S.W.I.M. Regional Group

Guidelines

Group Purpose: The group comes together for mutual support and prayer. This occurs through personal and confidential sharing followed by ministry to each individual through a Holy Spirit-led prayer time, according to each person's specific requests. Consequently, we pray as the Body of Christ, experience healing through the prayers of one another and are strengthened by seeing Christ present in every situation as our prayers are answered.

We pray "*according to God's will.*" 1 John 5:14-15

- God's will is to:
- provide our needs Matthew 7:31-33
 - grant our desires Psalm 37:4
 - restore us to health and wholeness James 5:14-15
 - give us the Holy Spirit to accomplish His purposes Luke 11:13

7-Part Format:

1. Introduce any new person(s) to the group taking a few minutes. Then, have each person introduce themselves to the new person(s) in a one-minute time limit. Make this one-minute introduction time-span a fun experience, i.e. "Let's see if we can each do this within one minute?"
2. Open prayer session with sentence prayers by members of group. Ask all to begin with "Thanksgiving" prayer sentences. After a few minutes, the leader moves to specific "Praise" prayer sentences, i.e. "Holy are you Lord and worthy of all praise."

Rationale: This specific order comes from the verse, which says, "*Enter God's gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise.*" (Ps.100:4) This model is reminiscent of how, in ancient times, the "Gates" were the first entrance into the presence of the palace of a king. When one advanced further into the palace one came to the inside "Courts" until finally one arrived at the "Inner Court" where the king sat on his throne. We are invited into the Presence of the Lord and his Glory comes to us as we praise him, for, "*He inhabits the praises of his people.*" (Ps.22:3 KJV) Some Regional Prayer Groups open this worship time by singing familiar Praise Songs if they have a volunteer musician or song leader.

3. Have each person share their prayer requests in response to questions like, "What would you like the Lord to do for you today?" or "How would you like us to pray for you today?"

Rationale: During the Puritan era in support/prayer groups, this question was phrased, "How is it with your soul (or spirit)?"

After the person has shared their requests, pray immediately for them as a group. Ask the person permission to lay hands on them for prayer. If they give permission, have some members of the group gather around them to pray in this manner. You may remind all that the, "laying on of hands," is an ancient Jewish and Christian custom. Not everyone has to gather or touch the person, and not every person needs to pray.

Have persons pray spontaneously for the requests mentioned. You may wish to anoint the person with oil on the forehead in the shape of a Cross, saying something like, "Mary, I anoint you in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." You can explain that this simple act is also a Judeo-Christian act, symbolizing the Holy Spirit "coming upon" the person to minister to them concerning their request. Once the prayer ministry begins allow persons to exercise their spiritual gifts as the Holy Spirit leads them, but do not have the expectation that these manifestations will always or need to happen. Have each person of the group share their requests and receive prayer when they are ready.

4. After prayer, choose the next meeting date and place if they have not already been determined

5. Hostess obtains participants contact information: Name, Address, Phone Numbers, Email
6. Share any news from *S.W.I.M. Int'l* including upcoming Retreats, Seminars, or Gatherings
7. Close meeting with a blessing and/or “sending forth” prayer. Hugs all around are most appropriate. Some groups like to have participants, who have the time, continue to have fellowship by going out for lunch or a snack together after the meeting. This is optional, but not a requirement.

Suggestions for leading:

- ~Be relaxed and help others to relax. Assure all that they are free to respond as they wish.
- ~Share that silent times are beneficial. Allow time for silence so people can think before responding to questions while sharing and allow silence time in prayer to listen to the Spirit.
- ~Divide the group into two smaller groups for prayer when the group reaches 7, 8 or more.
- ~Be alert for those who tend to dominate the group.
- ~Emphasize the need to be specific in sharing needs with each other and the Lord our God already knows our needs without lengthy details.
- ~Interrupt others only if they are sharing in a manner that is detrimental to group cohesiveness.
- ~Model/teach interest in what participants freely share without trespassing proper boundaries.
- ~Encourage, share, and pray with each other, but do not give advice. The group is not to “counsel” one another on specific issues, but to pray instead for God’s solution for them.
- ~Have the expectation that the Holy Spirit will be at work.

Role of the Prayer Group Facilitator:

- ~~Pray for those who will be in your group, before, during and between meetings.
- ~~Teach prayer, “by doing so,” in the group setting; keeping prayers brief.
- ~~Teach/enable people to share properly their prayer needs, not their life story or their personal prayer list, i.e. Uncle Jim’s upcoming surgery, unless person is care-giver for Uncle Jim.
- ~~At times, leader may need to interrupt creatively and redirect, to avoid conversational “rabbit trails.”
- ~~Create a “support” group feel; cultivate love, acceptance, understanding, and openness to the Presence of the Lord.
- ~~Remind the group at each session that what is shared within the group meeting is absolutely confidential and does not leave the room to be shared elsewhere.
- ~~Provide opportunities for the manifestation and exercise of spiritual gifts; Words of Wisdom, Knowledge, Prophecy, Healing, Miracles, Faith, Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues, Distinguishing of spirits, as listed in 1 Cor. 12:6-10.

Role of the Prayer Group Hostess:

1. Obtains a location for the Regional Group to meet and keeps venue contact person informed
2. Sends a reminder of each meeting to each of the region’s participants.
3. Maintains current contact information on participants and informs the *S.W.I.M.* Board of Directors of all changes and additions to: Susan Abrams, res18ibe@verizon for the *S.W.I.M.* database.
4. Emails date, time and location of the next meeting to Susan Abrams res18ibe@verizon.net

The Board of Directors of *S.W.I.M.* wish to extend our deepest gratitude to you for your willingness to serve the women in ministry in your area by volunteering for these responsibilities. For further information, please contact Rev. Gwen Ehrenborg, *S.W.I.M. Int'l* President, livingwitnesses@sbcglobal.net

May the blessing of the Lord be upon as you service Christ our Lord in this manner. (8-17-15)