



Helpful Guidelines for Starting A Hope for Parents of Prodigal Daughters Support Group

1. Customize the attached flyer and start emailing and passing it out to everyone you know. The address of the group is not on the flyer because you want those planning to attend to be in contact with you first so you have a chance to find out a little of their journey.
2. The Welcome Letter is then emailed as a follow up to your phone or email contact and this letter will give them the specifics of the first meeting.
3. Chapter 18 in *Praying for Your Prodigal Daughter* discusses guidelines and suggestions for support groups. Therefore, this is the first chapter to start with when you begin your group and then go back to Chapter 1, and proceed through the book chapter by chapter.
4. The first meeting, discuss Chapter 18 and give everyone a chance to share their story so you will all know from what point everyone is starting.
5. Ask members to read the chapter you are going to discuss before the group meets. At your meeting, use the Family and Support Group Discussion Questions at the end of each chapter to generate discussion. Try not to focus on any one child's specific problems—remember you are not a counseling or “fix it” group. What you are doing is learning how to pray God's will for your daughters and encourage and support each other through fellowship and prayer.
6. After discussion time, ask if anyone would like to share how God spoke to him or her during their journaling time. If you find that your group isn't journaling on their own, give them a moment to journal now. It is such an important part of the healing process.
7. Allow 10 minutes at the end of the evening for couples to talk privately with each other about how each of them answered the chapter's questions. For those who are not attending with a spouse, pair them up to discuss their answers together.
8. At the close of each meeting go to “40 Days of Praying for Your Daughter” in the Appendix and pray one of the prayers putting in the name of each of your daughters. Choose a different prayer scripture each week, and when you have gone through them all, start over and pray again, and again and again...

9. Encourage everyone to use the Prayer and Praise Journal in the Appendix. As time goes by, they will have a record of how God answered their prayers.

10. Close in prayer.

Commonly asked questions:

Can I come without my husband or wife? Answer: The ideal would be for a couple to come together because it is a family problem, but if only one will come, then make them feel welcome. There is also a good chance that you will have single parents in your group.

What about prodigal sons? Answer: The principles in the book apply to both sons and daughters, but all the stories are of daughters. So leave it up to the parents of sons as to whether or not they would be comfortable with that.

What if my daughter wants to come? Answer: It is best to keep this group for parents or guardians, but the questions at the end of each chapter are also for use by families, so you might suggest the family also read the book and discuss the questions at home together. It would also be an idea to start a Support Group for Prodigal Daughters.

What size should our group be? If you have more than 12-14 people, you might want to consider breaking the group up into smaller groups and come together in the beginning for greeting each other and the end for prayer and fellowship. If you are leading this group as a couple, each of you could facilitate one of the smaller groups.

Can a couple share a book? Answer: It is important for couples to go through the book together and pray together, which is stressed in the book, but the ideal is for each parent to have his or her own book. That allows each one to journal his or her own emotions, feelings, and prayers, which might differ from their spouse's. Usually each parent reacts differently to the situation, and having their own private space in the book allows each one to express freely without worrying what the other one will think or how they will react to their private thoughts. However, at the end of each support group meeting have couples spend a few moments privately discussing their individual answers before they leave the group.

Your goal is going to be to go through the book together, which will probably take you about a year if you meet every other week. When you finish the book, take a few meetings to reflect back on all you have seen God do in your lives since the first meeting. Then encourage the group members to branch out and start their own groups. Many of them will be ready to help others and there are so many needing help.

We would like to pray for you so please keep in touch. We are only one-step ahead of you in this venture so we'll keep you posted as we learn more. Once we have enough groups, we might start a blog so the different groups could interact and learn from each other.

We know that you will be blessed by this act of service and that many families will find peace in the midst of their crisis because you made time in your life to reach out and help them. We all are...

About His Work,

Janet and Dave Thompson