

Small Group Leader Guide for St. Mark's Breakthrough Prayer & Reflection Time

We suggest including this at the end of the small group gathering, so the leader can point out previously shared breakthroughs/God moments from the earlier discussion, no matter how small. Note that this breakthrough prayer & reflection time is distinct from sharing joys and concerns.

1. Recurring "Why" / Introduction about the breakthrough prayer:

St. Mark's is a community that believes in God's power to break through with new and unexpected possibilities when we pray and seek God's direction for our church and in our own lives. Whether you pray silently or aloud, we share in our breakthrough prayer individually at 8:00pm each day and anytime we gather in groups.

2. Centering moment:

- a. Have the group get in a comfortable position for a moment of silence
- b. Take deep cleansing breaths - "breathe slowly and deeply... notice your breathing, the feel of your chest as it rises and falls, the air in your nose and lungs..."
- c. "Let us be open to listening to God's guiding and direction"

3. Pray breakthrough prayer together:

- a. **God, please open doors to new hopes and dreams for St. Mark's and in our own lives. Give us the courage to follow where you lead. Amen.**
- b. Allow space for silence and reflection.

4. Reflection time:

- a. Ask group, "What are God moments you've experienced through the ministries and people of St. Mark's?"
- b. Ask, "Where do you feel God leading you individually?"
- c. Ask, "What new doors might God be opening for St. Mark's?"
- d. Capture the responses and forward to the church office. (Could have a scribe write a list, could fill in God moments sheets, could have group members type on their phones into stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough)
- e. Invite people who prefer to share anonymously to fill out a God moments sheet from connection table.

Background Info - What is a Breakthrough Prayer Initiative? *(This reference section is for broader context, for new leaders, or for people new to St. Mark's & the breakthrough prayer)*

Breakthrough prayer is a churchwide prayer movement adding a new possibility-focused prayer to the existing prayer life of the church. While our prayers are typically "down and in," about problems and requests, this additive breakthrough prayer is "up and out" –a prayer of openness toward God's infinite possibilities beyond our own imagination and plans. We ask for God to reveal God's direction for St. Mark's and in our own lives. We pray it together at 8:00p.m. daily, wherever we are, and anytime we gather in worship, small groups, rehearsals, and committee meetings.

One half of the initiative is prayer, and the other half is noticing and naming what we experience from God. What breakthroughs are you recognizing? What new direction is God revealing? As you listen for God's Spirit, please share and celebrate these God moments with your groups. Please also share God moments via stmarkscarmel.org/breakthrough.