



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

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## Spiritual Histories

We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take us or spare us. - *Proust*

The spiritual life is much harder than the material life for we are working in a medium nine-tenths of which is beyond the reach of our ordinary experience. - *John G. Bennett*

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### Opening and Chalice Lighting

(~3 minutes)

#### A Blessing

Just off the highway to Rochester, Minnesota,  
Twilight bounds softly forth on the grass.  
And the eyes of those two Indian ponies  
Darken with kindness.  
They have come gladly out of the willows  
To welcome my friend and me.  
We step over the barbed wire into the pasture  
Where they have been grazing all day, alone.  
They ripple tensely, they can hardly contain their happiness  
That we have come.  
They bow shyly as wet swans. They love each other.  
There is no loneliness like theirs.  
At home once more,  
They begin munching the young tufts of spring in the darkness.  
I would like to hold the slenderer one in my arms,  
For she has walked over to me  
And nuzzled my left hand.  
She is black and white,  
Her mane falls wild on her forehead,  
And the light breeze moves me to caress her long ear  
That is delicate as the skin over a girl's wrist.  
Suddenly I realize  
That if I stepped out of my body I would break  
Into blossom.

- *James Wright, Above the River: The Complete Poems and Selected Prose*

### Quiet Reflection

(~2 minutes)

Listen. Do not have an opinion while you listen because frankly, your opinion doesn't hold much water outside of Your Universe. Just listen. Listen until their brain has been twisted like a dripping towel and what they have to say is all over the floor.

- *Hugh Elliott*

### Review of Ground Rules

(~3 minutes)

### Sharing/ Check-In

(~45 minutes)

*Take two or three minutes to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. You can speak or you can pass. We want to know how you are in this moment.*

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**Readings**  
(~3 minutes)

The longest journey  
Is the journey inwards  
Of him who has chosen his destiny.  
- *Dag Hammarskjöld*.

Personal answers to ultimate questions. That is what we seek.  
- *Alexander Eliot*

Would any one of us undertake even a journey of a few hundred miles  
without knowing why, without having some purpose? And yet, so many  
of us live, undertaking not a chance task, but the great Task of life  
itself... and yet we ask not why.  
- *J.J. Van Der Leeuw*

The spiritual journey is the soul's commingling with ordinary life.  
- *Christina Baldwin*

Any path is only a path, and there is no affront to oneself or to  
others, in dropping it if that is what your heart tells you.  
- *Carlos Castaneda*

**Break/Quiet  
Contemplation**  
(~10 minutes)

**Sharing/Deep  
Listening**  
(~35 minutes)

*Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to go deeper into the topic.*

- All of us have a personal spiritual history. What are some of the key moments, practices, experiences that stand out in your spiritual history?
- Where are you now in your spiritual journey? Are you starting on a new path? At a crossroads? Walking a familiar road?
- Each of us has a different experience with terms like “spirituality”; how does this term resonate with you? Is there another term that feels more in sync with your experience?

**Discussion**  
(~10 minutes)

*This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.*

**Checkout/  
Likes & Wishes**  
(~4 minutes)

*What did you like about this meeting? What would you like to see change at future meetings?*

***Our next meeting is our fourth meeting, please remember that at this meeting you will be asked to make a commitment to participating with this group for the remainder of the church year. If you do not wish to continue, you will not be pressured or asked to explain your decision.***

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**Announcements**

(~2 minutes)

**Closing Reading/  
Extinguish Chalice**

(~3 minutes)

A person will worship something, have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts, but it will out. That which dominates our imaginations and our thoughts will determine our lives, and our character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*