



The G.E.M.

Edition 1

The Grace Electronic Magazine

January 2007

WELCOME TO 2007

Well, believe it or not, 2007 is now upon us and soon life will be back to "normal". Rushing to and from work, carrying the children to school and then to all their other activities. Not to mention all the other family responsibilities we have in our lives. On top of that, many of us have homecells and other ministries to lead. Just how are we going to fit it all together?

This is where Grace Media would like to help you out. Are you looking for some small group resources to effectively lead your homecell or other small group? Needing some fresh ideas for your children's or youth group ministry? Call us and let us help you.

In this our first edition of The G.E.M. we will introduce you to Africa Upper Room Ministries and some of their amazing titles currently available through Grace Media, that can be used either for individual or small group study.

We also have a short article for all small group leaders. Whether you are new to small group leadership or an experienced shepherd, you should find the article informative.

Should you be leading an Alpha or Emmaus course this year, Grace Media stocks all the materials you need to make this your best year ever.

And finally, remember that if we do not have what you are looking for, we will do our best to find it. God bless, and hope you have a fruitful 2007.

Glyn and Linda Williams

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Fight the good fight of faith ... (1Tim. 6:12)

Christians are supposed to fight - just not with each other. Our struggle is about our faith. God wants our faith to grow stronger, but the devil wants our faith in God to wither and die.

The battlefield is our mind. The devil tries to keep his "evidence" foremost in our thoughts: what our senses tell us and negative circumstances. God's evidence is contained in his unchanging Word: the Bible.

We must choose to feed the truths of the Bible into our thinking in order to keep our faith strong.

The devil still tells mankind his old lie, "Has God really said?" which we could modernise as, "Did God really mean that?" Yes, God meant what he said and said what he meant.

Then why does it not seem that way when we look around at our circumstances? Because we are supposed to fight the good fight of faith and actively receive the promised blessings. God will bring his Word to pass in our lives when we actively believe it. God's program is set up to reward those who trust Him. Maybe not here on earth, but definitely when we reach heaven.

Meanwhile, we should resist thoughts of doubt, knowing they originate with the evil one. We have authority over what we think. The Bible even tells us what to think about in Philippians 4:8, but we must exercise our authority through our words and actions.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1)

Faith involves things not seen, or not discerned by our physical senses. If we can see it or feel it then we do not need to have faith for it. Faith is our evidence until it manifests to our physical senses.

God does not lie. His written Word is our faith evidence until the blessing is evident even to our physical senses. Resist the devil by continuing to believe God's Word.

A good fight is a fight we can win.

AFRICA UPPER ROOM MINISTRIES

Africa Upper Room Ministries are committed to providing the very best quality Christian resources to all Africans at the most competitive prices.

It is their hope that you will find the books that they supply reflect that commitment.

Over the past 71 years Upper Room Ministries has built up an enviable reputation around the world for supplying many Christian denominations with the best quality printed resources.

As Africa Upper Room Ministries, their calling remains clear: -

We are intent on affording every African the opportunity to spend time with God each day.

The resources they provide are a means to that end, and should fundamentally assist people in their own daily spiritual journeys.

Currently they only represent two African Christian authors, but it is their hope and dream that in the future they will be able to represent more.

These resources are available in the Edenvale and Bedfordview areas exclusively through Grace Media.

Some of the Africa Upper Room Ministries titles currently available at Grace Media.

The Upper Room Disciplines 2007

ISBN: 0-8358-9820-1

Enter an ongoing dialogue with God through prayer, daily Bible reading, and meditation. The pages of *The Upper Room Disciplines* can help guide that conversation on a daily basis. *Disciplines* offers the following guidance:

- Daily scripture reading
- Meditations on scripture by 53 writers of different Christian traditions from around the world
- Prayer or suggestion for meditation

Available annually.

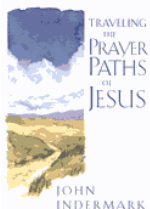
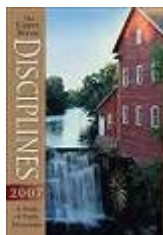
R75.00

Traveling the Prayer Paths of Jesus

by John Indermark

ISBN: 0-8358-9857-1

Join Jesus in places of prayer and learn from the daily readings that examine Jesus' prayers in six different settings:



- Out of solitude
- By the roadside
- On the mountainside
- In the upper room
- At the garden
- Upon the cross

An exercise for spiritual formation and a prayer follow each daily reading. This book includes a leader guide for a six-week, small group study.

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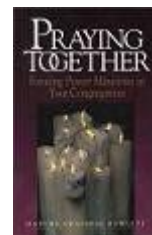
Praying Together

by Martha Graybeal Rowlett

ISBN: 0-8358-0979-X

Prayer is absolutely central to the church's identity and therefore to its mission and ministry. Martha Rowlett not only gives an informative overview of the range of prayer ministries in local congregations but, in doing so, also offers richly suggestive guidelines for developing specific prayer ministries.

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Creating a Life with God

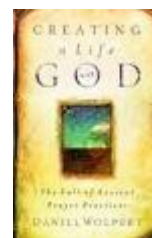
by Daniel Wolpert

ISBN: 0-8358-9855-5

Take your relationship with God to a new level as Daniel Wolpert introduces you to twelve prayer practices that

- Invite you to solitude and silence
 - Invite you to use your mind and imagination
 - Invite you to use your body and creativity
 - Invite you to connect with nature and community
- You'll meet "traveling companions" from history, like Ignatius and Julian of Norwich – individuals and groups who illuminate these prayers. You'll discover how classical approaches to God can deepen your prayer life today.

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Leading a Life With God

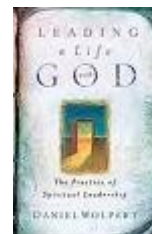
by Daniel Wolpert

ISBN: 0-8358-1003-6

Daniel Wolpert coaches readers through the transition from individual prayer life to prayer as a leader in a church or other faith-based organisation. He explores twelve prayer practices that offer ways to discern God's calling. These include:

- The Jesus prayer
- The prayer of examen
- Contemplative prayer
- Praying the Bible
- Praying in nature
- Creativity as prayer

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SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

So, you have taken on the leadership of a small group. Congratulations and welcome to a great adventure! The following notes are to help you as you facilitate excellent spiritual discussions. You do not need to be an expert or know lots about the Bible, you only need to be willing to learn and grow yourself, and to serve others in their spiritual journey.

Share the leadership.

When leading a small group, always bear in mind that your role is to guide the discussion and help draw people into the group process. Do not try to be the expert and do everything yourself. If there are other people in the group who are gifted or more experienced in certain areas than what you are, then involve them in the leadership process and other activities of the group. Let them host the meetings, lead in prayer, provide food and drinks, lead parts of the discussion and so on.

Preparation.

The work you do between meetings will determine group effectiveness during meetings. Faithful preparation does not mean that you will control the meeting or that it will progress exactly as you planned. Rather, it provides you with a guiding sense of the desired outcomes of the time together. This allows you to gauge the pace of the meeting and make adjustments along the way. Above all, make sure you are clear about the overall goal of the meeting. Then, even if you are appropriately sidetracked, you can easily help the group to refocus. Whatever material you are using, you should complete the study before the meeting. This way you will know exactly where the discussion should lead, and if any questions or concerns raised early in the discussion will be covered later in the meeting or in subsequent meetings

Curriculum.

The content of your study should never take precedence over the process of transformation within your small group. There will be appropriate times when you can set aside the curriculum and pray, attend another event together as a group, or even to just spend an evening having fun together. Jesus did not command us to complete the curriculum, but rather to focus on the whole persona and make disciples. The curriculum is the tool we use, and not the master. Use it with consistency and discernment, and your group will be well served. However, be clear about the primary focus of the group when you meet, and remind them every couple of weeks about the core purpose so that the group does not drift. Even if you decide to use a curriculum that is designed for a set number of

meetings, do not worry if you take longer. Growth of the members and the group as a whole is far more important than the strict adherence to a programme.

Length.

There is no set length of time that your meeting should last for, but seventy to ninety minutes should be ample, including prayer and some social time. If you have more or less time, adjust your curriculum accordingly.

Balancing care-giving and study.

One of the most difficult things to do in any small group is to balance the tension between providing care to members, and completing the material. A group would fail miserably if someone came to a meeting and said, "My husband is having an affair," and the group said a two-minute prayer and then started the curriculum. Always bear in mind that people are the reason you are together as a group, and they all have needs, real needs. You need to ensure that you communicate your love and concern for them, even if you are sidetracked and do not complete the programme.

When people share their hurts or problems, address each one with empathy and prayer. If you think that more time should be devoted to someone, why not set aside some time at the end of the meeting and invite members to stay for additional prayer or to console the person. Cut the meeting short by a few minutes if you have to. Alternatively, deal with it immediately for ten to fifteen minutes, take a short break, then start the study.

Even if you are not able to devote large portions of the meeting time to care-giving, you and others from the group can provide this between meetings over the phone or in other settings. Learn to leverage your time. If your meeting begins at 7:00pm, ask the member in need and perhaps one or two others from the group to come at 6:30pm for sharing and prayer. A person will feel loved and your group will share in the care-giving.

Assign prayer partners or groups of three to be little communities within the group. Over the phone or in occasional meetings outside the group they could connect and check in on how life is going.

When in doubt, shout!

Do not be afraid to ask for help from others, including pastors or other staff at the church. Whether it be for material, training, advice or care needs for your group. You are in this together with them and they will be more than willing to help.

We trust that this advice will help on your great adventure as a small group leader.

ON PROMOTION

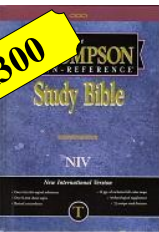
REFERENCE & BIBLES

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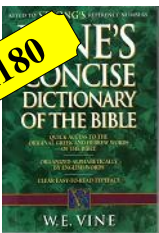
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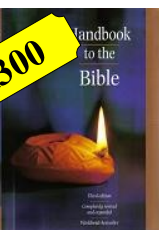
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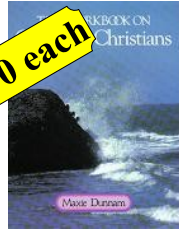
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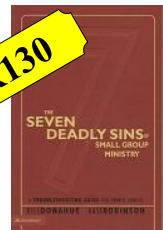
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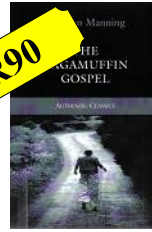
CLASSIC AUTHORS

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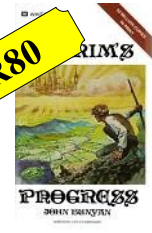
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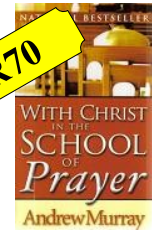
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offramp. Turn right up hill. Stay in
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4th set of lights, turn left under
bridge. At t-junction turn left.
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