



**IN THE COMPANY  
OF BROTHERS 3**  
8 sessions on preparing  
to be missional

## INTRODUCTION

- Please complete *In the Company of Brothers 1 and 2* before starting these sessions. We want mission to flow out of the abundance of our walk with God so the spiritual formation practices we cover in those sessions need to be embedded first. Those earlier sessions are also designed to help you gradually increase vulnerability with each other.
- *In the Company of Brothers 3* has a dual focus: Each session will include a spiritual formation practice and a mission exercise. (Later, *In the Company of Brothers 4* will build on that with more steps to learn how to recognize God at work and gently move out with him.)
- A number of sessions make use of online music clips or videos.
- You will also find companion resources at [baptistwomen.com/soul-sisters](http://baptistwomen.com/soul-sisters)

*We pray that as you turn your focus outward, you will continue to strengthen the core of your relationship with God and that you will become carriers of the loving presence of God.*

SESSION ONE — Strengthening Our Core	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Breath Prayer	<b>Mission Training</b> Mission as Worship

### 1. Introduction

Welcome back! The theme of *In the Company of Brothers 3* is preparing to be missional.

- Here is the format for each session:
  - **Entering In**—focusing our thoughts
  - **Spiritual Formation**—learning some practices to help us encounter Christ and be transformed
  - **Report Back**—sharing what is truly in our souls
  - **Mission Training**—biblically-based missional thinking and application
  - **Closing**—consolidating what we have learned and shared, often by bringing it to God in prayer
  - **Homework**—taking small steps toward mission

Today our focus in Spiritual Formation will be on a practice called *breath prayer*. Our Mission Training will be on *mission as worship*. Let's begin with some sharing before we enter silence.

### 2. Report Back

How is your soul? Go around the group giving each person a chance to briefly answer the following questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how have you been since the last time we met? Why did you choose that number?
- What has been the most significant thing in your spiritual life since we last met?

### 3. Entering In

- Let's reaffirm our confidentiality commitment to each other. We choose to value what other people share with us and to protect it as something only they have the right to share with others.

4. **Spiritual Formation—*breath prayer***

- Has anyone heard of *breath prayer* before?
- Note to facilitator: please have a volunteer read the inset that explains breath prayer.

**Breath Prayer**

A breath prayer is a simple phrase you use to draw your focus to Christ. It is useful when you enter a time of silence (or get distracted part way through). You can choose part of a Bible verse, or perhaps choose a few words that express your desire for this season in your life.

Over time, that phrase becomes deeply embedded so God is able to bring it to mind as you need it. Sometime later, the Holy Spirit may lead you to choose a different phrase.

Here are some examples, but feel free to create your own:

Come, Lord Jesus.

Loving Father, I trust you.

Holy Spirit, set me free from self-interest.

- In a minute we will practice a time of silence. If you wish, choose one of the breath prayers to pray silently at the beginning of this time.
- *A reminder about silence:* This isn't the same thing as praying inwardly. In silence we quiet our thoughts, quiet our breathing, and let God control our time. He may want to speak into our minds. He may just want us to sit with Him. Don't worry—any of those things are good and stillness with God gets easier with practice. For now, if your mind wanders, just say your breath prayer and re-focus.
- We will observe several minutes of silence. You can silently say your breath prayer at the beginning and then

you can repeat it any time your mind wanders. Then I will end with a quiet “Amen.”

**5. Mission Training—*mission as worship***

- Note to facilitator: Please have a volunteer read the inset on *mission as worship*.

**Mission as Worship**

*Mission from the core outward.* We want our mission to be built upon continuing encounter with God. In other words, we don't graduate from spiritual formation to do mission—but rather, mission flows out of communion with God.

*Mission as worship.* We offer love to others as an intentional, conscious, act of worship to God. Jesus identifies so closely with hurting people that He says what we do for them, we do for Him (Matthew 25:40).

*Wholistic mission.* Rather than being compartmentalized, we are consistent and integrated in who we are, what we say, and what we do. We proclaim a gospel of righteousness that has implications for all of life.

Activity—Visio Divina—Matthew 10:42

- Please have a volunteer read the following explanation:

*“Previously we learned about Lectio Divina (which means divine reading). It is an ancient Christian practice of focusing on a small part of Scripture so as to let it penetrate our hearts. There is a similar practice called Visio Divina.*

*With this practice, you look at a picture while meditating on a piece of Scripture. Visual learners may find this especially meaningful. If you feel uncomfortable, simply close your eyes instead and listen to the verse. The idea is to let God speak to you.”*

- Facilitator, please open in prayer.
- Then **slowly** read Matthew 10:42.
- Observe a few minutes of silence, reading the verse at least one more time.
- Facilitator - close with a quiet "Amen." Then ask:
  - What came to mind as you looked at the picture?

#### 6. Closing

- Divide into partners.
- Take two minutes to tell your partner about a dream you've had for your life but haven't yet pursued.
- Pray blessings over each other: for each other's family, job, spiritual life, health, hobbies, dreams, and more.

#### 7. Homework

- Practice breath prayer as often as you can during the week.

Looking ahead: Arrange for a laptop with the video clip for next week. If that is not possible, share the link and ask members to watch it at home before the next session.



<b>SESSION TWO — Making Room</b>	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Sabbath	<b>Mission Training</b> Creating Capacity for Relationships

**1. Entering In**

- Do you know that in the midst of a stressful day, you can take a mini vacation by taking a few minutes of silence?
- Begin by closing your eyes and listen to the facilitator read Psalm 107: 28-30.
- Then observe several minutes of silence, using your breath prayer if you lose focus.
- Finish with “Amen” from the leader.

**2. Report Back**

- How was your experience of breath prayer last week?
- Choose 2-3 words to describe the true condition of your soul. Explain your choice.

**3. Spiritual Formation**

- What is your experience of Sabbath?
- How rejuvenating is it for you?

**4. Missional Training—Creating Margin**

- Facilitator: We are going to watch a 4-minute segment of a video by Rick Warren called *Making Space to Slow the Pace of Your Life*. The full series is available on the Saddleback Church website.
  - Watch minute 1:45 to minute 5:50 of the video by Rick Warren on creating margin.  
<https://saddleback.com/watch/living-with-margin/making-space-to-slow-the-pace-of-your-life?autoplay=true>
- What stood out to you in the video?

- Where could you pare down your schedule to reduce stress and create margin to reach out to other people?

#### **5. Closing**

- Pray, asking God to bring your mission field to mind (a person, a place, or a group). Wait in silence for a few minutes.
- In pairs, share your first impressions from God. Pray in faith for what God has placed in your thoughts.

*Our God is a Father of abundance. He gives abundant time for all He wants us to do.*

#### **6. Homework**

- Fast from multi-tasking this week – do only one thing at a time.
- Try to make it a daily habit to spend at least 10 minutes of intentional silence with God. You will be amazed by how much difference this will make in how well you hear from God and listen to others.
- Save an order of service from Sunday morning and bring it to the next session (or write down, in order, the elements of a typical service at your church).



SESSION THREE — Developing Awareness	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Sacred Pathways—Music	<b>Mission Training</b> Recognizing Our Own Culture Prayer Walking Your Church

**1. Report Back**

- Homework from last week asked us to fast from multi-tasking. Did you manage to do only one thing at a time? When was that most difficult? What were the benefits when you succeeded?
- How do those days compare to the atmosphere of the other days?

**2. Spiritual Formation**

- Have a volunteer read the inset on *Sacred Pathways*.
- Today we will try the sensate pathway via our sense of sound.
- Either the facilitator or a volunteer begins by saying a simple prayer, offering the group to God and inviting the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Then play a worship song while you close your eyes and observe silence. Here is one option:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bj-rlGcj8M> (If it feels long you can fade it out around the 2:47 mark.)

**3. Mission Training — recognizing our own culture**

- How would you describe Christian culture? In other words, what language and patterns do church people use that differ from those who don't usually come to church?
- How would you describe your own local church culture? (e.g. traditional/casual/intellectual/family etc.)
- What are you proud of? What things upset people?
- Read James 2:1-9.
- Think about how you respond to class differences in your church:
  - How comfortable would you be if a homeless person came? How would other receive them?

- How well does your church receive someone of a different race?
- What if someone is socially awkward? Noisy?

#### Activity

- Imagine someone decides to seek God for the first time in their lives . . . and they choose your church. Let's imagine how they might feel while they are there.
  - As someone reads an order of service, stop at each element and discuss how a total newcomer might feel at that point:
    - What might confuse them?
    - What might make them feel uncomfortable?
    - What could help that?
- Facilitator: *Effective missionaries don't ask others to change; they change themselves.*

#### **4. Closing**

- Prayer Walk through your church.
- Stop frequently to pray for the experience new people will have at that spot. See the companion resource on *prayer walking through a church* at [baptistwomen.com/resources/baptist-women's-prayer-network](http://baptistwomen.com/resources/baptist-women's-prayer-network)

#### **5. Homework**

- Research definitions of ethnocentrism. Come back prepared to share:
  - a one-sentence definition
  - how ethnocentrism might affect how we relate to people from outside the church

### **Sacred Pathways**

Our personalities and gifts often make it easier to connect with God in certain ways. Some have called those differences sacred pathways. For example:

- I. *Naturalists*: feel closest to God outdoors
- II. *Sensates*: worship God experientially
- III. *Traditionalists*: love God through ritual and symbol
- IV. *Ascetics*: love God in solitude and in simplicity
- V. *Activists*: love God by advocating for justice
- VI. *Caregivers*: love God by loving others
- VII. *Enthusiasts*: celebrate a miraculous God
- VIII. *Contemplatives*: adore God
- IX. *Intellectuals*: love God with their minds

On one hand, we want to make best use of the pathway that suits how God has made us. On the other hand, sometimes it's good to try other paths to broaden our experience of God.

(adapted from "Sacred Pathways," <https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/2988a589/files/uploaded/sacred-pathways.pdf>)

SESSION FOUR — Learning to See	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Gospel Contemplation	<b>Mission Training</b> Ethnocentrism

**1. Entering In**

- Today we will have our time of silence after the Gospel Contemplation.
- Ask for a volunteer to open in prayer.
- Ask for a volunteer to read the quote for today's theme: (if possible, have this written and posted in the room)

*"The first and most important task of any missionary is to understand and truly respect the host culture. That requires a willingness to set aside judgement."*

**2. Report Back—your definitions of ethnocentrism**

- Use chart paper to record all your definitions of ethnocentrism.
- Is there anything God is highlighting for you?

**3. Spiritual Formation—Gospel Contemplation**

*The parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector*  
*Luke 18: 9–14*

- Very closely related to *Lectio Divina* is *Gospel Contemplation*. The goal of both is to deeply interact with a short passage of Scripture, but in this case, we also add the benefit of imagination to help us notice things we might otherwise miss.
- Have the group close their eyes and imagine the scene as the facilitator reads Luke 18: 9–14. What does it look like and sound like? How do you feel?
- For the second reading ask the group to pay attention to a word or phrase that seems to stand out for them.

- For the third and final reading, ask God what He wants to say to you through that word or phrase.
- Open it up for sharing: Have each person choose one or two of the following questions to answer:
  - What did God emphasize to you?
  - Was there anything new that you realized?
  - How can you apply this in your own life?

#### **4. Mission Training—your definition of the gospel**

What is your definition of the gospel?

- For years, we have been taught that evangelism always starts by talking about sin. However, we now live in a postmodern culture. (We'll talk more about that in session 6). With post-moderns we have to start with acceptance and relationship, and then let God Himself lead people to any changes He wants them to make.

#### Activity

- Discuss the following definition from Sue Carr, director of 541 Eatery and Exchange: *The essence of the gospel is this: God already loves you—at this moment, just as you are.*
- In contrast, what are some non-verbal ways we express disapproval of others? List as many as you can on chart paper or a whiteboard.

#### **5. Closing**

- Begin in prayer by asking God to show you a circumstance where you have evaluated someone. Wait in silence for several minutes.
- Facilitator, please close with a prayer, offering confession for the past, and asking the Holy Spirit to remind and empower us to forsake judgement in the future.

#### **6. Homework**

- *Pew swap*: Beginning this Sunday, regularly change where you sit in church. Pray for the people around you.

(If you are unsure what to pray, see *In the Company of Brothers 1* for how to pray Scripture.)

- Optional: Facilitator hands out copies of the blog on the difference between discernment and judgement at xxx

Looking ahead: Facilitator, please bring a small jar of oil next week.

SESSION FIVE—Becoming More Relational	
Spiritual Formation Healing Prayer	Mission Training Reflective Listening

**1. Entering In**

- Say a breath prayer and then observe silence for 5 minutes. (You may choose a breath prayer from Session 1 or use your own breath prayer.)

**2. Report Back**

- What is something God spoke to you about last week? (Either through Scripture, prayer, circumstance, or through another person.)

**3. Spiritual Formation—Anointing with oil and praying for healing**

- Have volunteers take turns reading the following verses:

*Matthew 9:35 “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.” (NIV)*

*James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.” (NIV)*

*Psalms 103:2-4 “Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion.” (NIV)*

- Read James 5:14 together:  
*“Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.” (NIV)*
- Ask if anyone is sick.

- Have them sit in the centre of the group.
  - Remind everyone that we are praying for the person to be healed (not for them to have peace while they continue to be sick).
  - Ask for a volunteer to anoint their forehead with oil in the name of the Lord and pray a simple prayer.
- 4. Mission Training—listening without surprise or shock**
- Read inset on *Reflecting Back*.

**Reflecting Back**  
 Here are examples of positive ways to reflect back what you are hearing in a conversation.  
 I hear you use this word several times.  
 I notice you are saying happy things but your voice sounds sad.  
 I hear the excitement/frustration etc. in your voice.  
 I hear you asking a lot of questions.  
 This particular phrase stood out for me . . .

Activity

- Take turns sharing a time when you felt misunderstood or unheard. (If you can't think of that kind of example, share a different painful memory.)
- Have 1 or 2 people reflect back.
- Have 1 volunteer anoint the person who shared with oil and pray for the person, that God would heal that hurt. (Take turns being the one to anoint someone. More than one person can also pray.)

**5. Homework**

- Between sessions, look for verses on mission. Choose one that especially resonates with you as something you want to ask God to do through you. Write the verse on a card and bring it to the next session.
- Practice hospitality once this week:



- Ask God to lead you to someone you barely know in your church and invite them over.
- Before they arrive, take a few minutes of silence to invite the presence of God. Ask God to help you to listen well and reflect back positively.
- Try to remember to consciously worship Jesus as you serve them.

<b>SESSION SIX — Understanding Cultural Change</b>	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Receiving Promises from Scripture	<b>Mission Training</b> Understanding Culture: Modernism and Postmodernism

**1. Entering In**

- Pray to welcome the Holy Spirit. Offer yourselves to God and be silent for several minutes.

**2. Report Back**

- Take turns sharing 1 high and 1 low since the last time we met.

**3. Spiritual Formation—learning to receive promises from God**

Homework last week was to find verses on mission and choose one that resonated.

- Take turns reading the verse you chose. How would you like God to use you?
- Divide into pairs and pray for each other, affirming that God is fully able to do it.

**4. Mission Training—Understanding Postmodernism**

- There has been a massive cultural shift in our generation.
- Please have a volunteer read the chart on the differences between modernism and postmodernism.
- Then discuss:
  - How do these differences come out in your church/home/community?
  - As a group, try to think of examples for each space.
  - What other differences have you seen? Add them to the chart.

- Take turns sharing something you need to change if you want to connect well with post-moderns

**5. Closing**

- Pray blessings over specific post-moderns in your family, church, and community.

**6. Homework**

- If you have not tried *hospitality as a spiritual discipline* yet (see last week's homework), please aim for that before the next session.

<b>Moderns</b>	<b>Postmoderns</b>
Strive for order and control	Strive for relationship and connectedness
<i>For example:</i> Want to use Robert's Rules of Order	<i>For example:</i> Aim for Consensus building
Knowledge is most valued	Experience is most valued
<i>For example:</i>	<i>For example:</i>
Believe that truth is made up of clear, objective facts. Therefore, science and rationality are the best ways of determining truth.	Believe statements are influenced by perspective. Even statistics can reflect unintended bias. Therefore, multiple perspectives give a fuller picture of the truth.
<i>For example:</i>	<i>For example:</i>

SESSION SEVEN — Stretching	
<p><b>Spiritual Formation</b> Hospitality as a Spiritual Discipline Journaling Prayer</p>	<p><b>Mission Training</b> Christianese Learning to Notice</p>

**1. Entering In**

- Observe a few minutes of silence. You may use your breath prayer to focus as you begin.
- Perhaps the facilitator can quietly read a Scripture verse over the group such as:  
*“The LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs.” Zephaniah 3:17 (NLT)*

**2. Report Back**

- Did you find you could offer hospitality to someone as an act of worship to God? What could you do next time?
- Hospitality is a spiritual discipline. Something we are told not to neglect (Hebrews 13:2). This verse uses the word *stranger* to emphasize that hospitality extends beyond those we are already familiar with.
- Over the next while, look for opportunities to take the next step and show hospitality to someone who you don't know well.

**3. Spiritual Formation—Journaling Prayer**

Many people find that writing their prayers can help them focus, give them a record to look back on, and be very worshipful. Let's try it.

- Pass out paper and pens.
- Put on quiet worship music. (You could use <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfjrxvVnmkE> or choose your own.)
- Begin by listening in silence with eyes closed.

- When you are ready, write a prayer to God.
- Ask if anyone would like to share their prayer. It is OK if everyone prefers to keep their prayers between themselves and God.

#### **4. Mission Training—Combatting Christianese**

- Read Acts 17:22–23.

The first step for any missionary is learning the language.

- What are some words and phrases we use that people in our local coffee shop would never say?
- Write them down on a piece of chart paper. (Examples: *accepted Jesus, saved, sin*)
- As a group, try to find alternative words or phrases that someone who has never been to church will use. Find as many as possible.

#### Activity – Noticing

God is already at work all around us but we often do not see it.

- Read John 4:34–36.
- If possible, watch the video clip  
<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/14972/get-service>

#### **5. Homework**

- Go to a place where people meet in your community.
- Prayerfully ask God to help you notice people.
- Find the card where you wrote your mission verse (or make another one) and bring it to the next session.

Looking ahead

- Next week is the last session. See if you can have this session in a chapel or sanctuary. Could some people bring some fabrics, battery-operated candles, or other things to make a beautiful, intimate space for your group? Bring back your small jar of oil.

Session Eight— Commissioning For Mission	
<b>Spiritual Formation</b> Liturgy	<b>Mission Training</b> Service of Consecration

**1 Entering In**

- Since we will be celebrating a liturgy later, just have one volunteer open in prayer now.

**2 Reporting Back**

- Where did you go for your noticing exercise?
- What did you see?
- How did you feel?

**3 Spiritual Formation—Liturgy**

- Read the inset on the purpose and value of liturgy.

**4 Mission Training—A service of consecration to mission**

- Go into the chapel/sanctuary if possible and experience the liturgy of Consecration to Mission.

**Consecration to Mission**

Drawing In

- Invite a volunteer to read this quote from Bill Johnson: *“Great faith does not come from great striving, but from great surrender.”*
- Ask everyone to close their eyes and quiet their minds.
- Read Romans 1:1 over them and then observe several minutes of silence.

Readings

- Volunteer read Matthew 18:8,9
- Volunteer read John 12:3

Sharing

- What is something God might be asking you to surrender?
- Reflect back.

### Consecration

- Pass your mission verse card to the person beside you.
  - Pass the jar of oil from person to person.
  - When the jar reaches you, take a drop of oil on your finger and anoint the person beside you and read their verse over them.
    - Perhaps you will anoint their hands because they feel called to do something, or their lips because they desire to speak for God.
- (Take care not to get oil on clothing as it will stain.)
- Pray that God will fulfill that promise.

### **Looking Ahead**

- Do you want to go on to *In the Company of Brothers 4*? Download the booklet as needed. You'll find it at [baptistwomen.com/resources/soul-sisters](http://baptistwomen.com/resources/soul-sisters)



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