

The covenant:

1. I will attend 5 out of the 6 sessions.
2. I will hold in confidence anything that is said by another group member.
3. I will trust my group members enough to risk saying vulnerable things, as the Spirit leads me.
4. I will seek more to put something into this experience than to get something out of it.
5. I will pray once a week for this group. [Hint: set an alarm on your phone.]
6. I will open my heart to what God may do in me and through me in this group.
7. I will pay attention to how God is working in the lives of my group members and, as led by the Spirit, tell them what I see.

Signed by the members:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

Session 1: The Open Door

Opening:

Once everyone has gathered, set a timer for 1 minute of silence.

After 1 minute, read this verse out loud, slowly and clearly.

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in and eat with you and you with me.” Revelation 3:20

Enjoy one more minute of silence.

Ask the group to listen to the verse again, and choose one word or phrase that resonates with them, no explanation necessary. Read the verse again:

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door,
I will come in and eat with you and you with me.” Revelation 3:20

Invite the group members to say their word or verse (can go around in a circle).

Read this prayer:

Lord Jesus, as we begin this study together, help us to listen when you are knocking.
May we have the courage to open the door to you and to invite you in to sit and eat.
In your name we pray, Amen.

Have one person read aloud this quote from the book:

“Every morning is an open door; every moment can become one. Some of us see doors and seize them, and so life becomes a divine adventure. Some of us shrink back or fail to see. A room with no door is a prison. To fail to embrace the open door is to miss the work God has made for us to do. If we want to experience more of the Spirit of God in our lives, we need to train ourselves to look for and respond to moments of divine opportunity.” (*All the Places* p. 18)

Discussion

How do you know that a door is open? List the characteristics we think of for “an open door.”

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Ortberg suggests that “Every moment can become [an open door].” Does this feel like opportunity or pressure, and why?

Opportunity:

Pressure:

At the end of 2 Corinthians, Paul tells his friends that he longs to visit them and then he writes this: “But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” (2 Cor. 16:9)

Look over your list of open door characteristics. Is “many adversaries” on the list? Probably not. But “open door” does not mean “easy way.”

Drawing from other examples in scripture, in his book Ortberg reminds us that open doors are not necessarily...

- Thrilling
- Pleasant, smooth experiences
- Free of hardship and struggle
- A guarantee
- A set of detailed instructions
- Easy to choose

Knowing this, read the quote from the book again:

“Every morning is an open door; every moment can become one. Some of us see doors and seize them, and so life becomes a divine adventure. Some of us shrink back or fail to see. A room with no door is a prison. To fail to embrace the open door is to miss the work God has made for us to do. If we want to experience more of the Spirit of God in our lives, we need to train ourselves to look for and respond to moments of divine opportunity.”

Did these words feel like pressure because we were afraid to fail? If an open door is not a guarantee, does that make it easier or harder to go through it?

Remember this: “An open door is an opportunity provided *by* God, to act *with* God and *for* God.” --Ortberg

An open door is not about you—not about your success or your joy or your ease. An open door is about what God wants to do with you, today, in this place for his glory.

Because of this lesson, what will change in your life with God and others this week?