



Host Guide

Overview

This “Sinking Deep Host Guide” includes all the details you need to be set up for successful hosting. In addition to this guide, we provide a few extra resources to make hosting seamless and ensure your time is most spent investing in the women who attend and in the word of God.

- “Hourly Flow:” A detailed timeline for the hour you host, print weekly for your reference
- “Study Tools:” Prayer Request Sheet, Snack Sign Up, Brunch Sign Up, etc, print as needed
- “Participant Guide:” Guidelines for participants to acknowledge, print copies for first week
- “Current Study (title varies):” Includes weekly devotionals, verses, and space for participants to journal, print copies for the appropriate week

Our Purpose

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit” (Jer.17:7-8). We exist to connect women to one another and to God so that the roots of their faith may sink down deep into Christ. We believe ANYONE who knows Jesus savingly and affirms that the Bible is the inerrant Word of God can host- ALL you have to do is invite a friend, pick a date, and show up!

What To Expect

The Sinking Deep group structure is a tried and true, simple, yet effective way to grow deeper in our faith and connect with one another in the Body of Christ. Through years of hosting Bible Studies, through trial and error, and through the guiding of the Holy Spirit, Sinking Deep Ministry offers a new perspective on “Bible Studies.” We know that we are called to meet together and encourage one another in Christ; however in today’s fast paced culture, this can become an act of labor rather than an act of love. “Bible Study” for many reasons can become just another “to do” marked off the list or even worse, something we don’t have time for. Our hope and prayer is that this group rejuvenates your soul as you

host and abundantly blesses every woman who attends. *Below are some of the ways Sinking Deep offers a new and different way of doing "Bible study:"*

Women of all ages

"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live... Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children" Titus 2:3-5. The bible is full of scripture that encourages both younger and older women to learn from each other and build each other up in the Lord. This can and will lead to unexpected blessings. We have seen 19 year-olds in the same group as 70 year-olds; however, we recommend limiting the group to adult females (18 and older). This is because the nature of what is shared by women may be sensitive. While you may feel a 16 year old is mature enough,

One hour long

"A little knowledge of God is worth more than a great deal of knowledge about him." J I Packer. We know that when it comes to our hearts and time spent in scripture that God is much more concerned with quality than with quantity. The Pharisees knew all of God's word but they didn't actually know Him. The Sinking Deep group structure is designed to be just as effective as a one and a half or two hour study. The Sinking Deep vision is for each woman to personally grow closer and deeper in her relationship with God and closer to one another as sisters in Christ. This allows for people who are short on time to still attend a bible study.

Open group policy

In the parable of the lost sheep in the book of Luke, Jesus tells us of a shepherd who leaves his flock of ninety-nine sheep to search for the one that is lost. This shows how much Jesus cares about pursuing our hearts and meeting us where we are that day. Participants are free to come or not come as they choose. They are free to invite a sister in Christ to the group *anytime* throughout the duration of the session. This leads to a sense of being welcomed and helps to foster an open and loving environment for all participants.

No homework

In depth Bible Studies are truly a wonderful model and very common among churchgoers and women especially, but that is not what we focus on in the Sinking Deep group. By not assigning homework, this creates a "no pressure" environment, and an option for those that don't have time in their schedule for an extensive, time consuming Bible study.

Meditating on Scripture

Our time together is centered around meditating on scripture. To "meditate" on something is to focus your mind fully on that thing- to reflect and ponder upon it. When Christ was born angels appeared and shepherds sought out the baby, but we learn that "Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart." Luke 2:19. Later when Jesus was found preaching in the temple at age 12 we read again, "... But his mother treasured all these things in her heart." Luke 2:51. Mary demonstrates the purpose of meditation: to treasure God's words in our heart. Meditating on scripture is a practice that

many Christians are unfamiliar with yet it is a vital spiritual practice commanded by God. “Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.” Joshua 1:8. God promises spiritual prosperity and blessing upon those who meditate on his word and live by it. Meditating and pondering on God’s word blesses our lives because it causes our minds to be renewed “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:2 ESV). As we repent and align our lives with God’s ways, we will notice evidence of sanctification and transformation. Practicing meditation is a game changer and will foster a Holy Spirit filled environment for the group and the individual. As a host, pray for and anticipate God to speak to each woman and meet them exactly where they are.

Scripture Based Structure

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). The way we structure our time together is intentionally designed to help women apply this verse to their lives. Each gathering we devote time for, “meditation,” “sharing,” “coffee and snacks,” and “prayer.” Our goal is to come together as sisters in Christ to fulfill this beautiful mission laid out in the book of Acts: to be unified with one another and with God as we earnestly seek his face.

Meditation:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching...”

Each week we dedicate time to meditate on the teachings of scripture. This creates space for each woman to slow down and intentionally set her heart and her mind on God and to listen to what he has to say to her personally through his word. *We recommend journaling as you meditate.* “Blessed is the one... whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers” (Psalms 1:2-3).

Sharing

“They devoted themselvesTo fellowship”

Each week we will have the opportunity to fellowship with one another and share what God has laid on our hearts during the meditation. It’s beautiful to hear all the different things God illuminates to each woman personally. Often the scripture speaks directly to someone’s life situation and sharing becomes an opportunity to hear from one another about how God is working in our lives. We share, “that we may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith, both yours and mine” (Rom 1:12). This time will draw us closer to one another in Christ and encourage connection and friendship.

Coffee & Snacks

“They devoted themselves... to the breaking of bread

Though we won’t be doing a ceremonial communion each week, we will have the time and opportunity to “break bread” together. “Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of

God " 1 Corinthians 10:31. Eating and drinking together is something we all do and it's a natural way that we connect with one another. It helps to create a space that feels warm and welcoming.

Prayer

"They devoted themselves... prayer"

Each week we open and close the group with prayer together. This sets the intention of drawing near to God as we invite his Holy Spirit to speak to us, convict us, and work in us. "Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always." 1 Chronicles 16:11. We can ask for prayer and pray for and over one another.

Sinking Deep Guidelines

Our goal is to create an open space where each woman can feel free to share her thoughts and her heart after her meditation time with God. This can make for a rich experience where we as women learn from one another and grow as we listen to each woman's unique perspective and personal revelations. This will take intentionality and respect from and for each participant. Please do your best to follow these guidelines and pray that we may clothe ourselves in love and compassion for one another.

- We are here to **support one another**, not to "fix" one another. Our time together during group is a time to listen to one another, not a time to advise or counsel one another.
- Remember to **respect one another**.
 - Please try and be on time; we want to make sure we can begin and end our session in the time given.
 - Be aware of the length of your sharing time and aim to keep your turn under 3 minutes. This will allow time to make sure that everyone gets a chance to share.
 - Please try not to interrupt and keep all comments to a minimum until everyone has finished sharing.
 - Remain from cross- talk. Cross-talk is when two individuals engage in a conversation excluding all others, especially when another speaker is sharing. If you have something you would like to speak with someone about in further detail, feel free to reach out to that person after the study or on your own time.
- **Anonymity and confidentiality** are essential. What is shared in the group stays in the group. If you are concerned about sharing something that might be leaked outside the group, use discernment before sharing

Host Responsibilities during gathering

- Host Provides: Meeting location, Coffee or tea, sign up food sheets, prayer request sheets.
 - Host sends prayer requests each week via email to the group.
- Guide group to open and close in prayer. As a host, you can either open and close the group in prayer or you are free to ask another participant to open or close in prayer. Ultimately this can be something anyone can do who is feeling led.

- Welcome any new guests
- Guide transitions- host is responsible to guide the transitions from one to the next in the hourly flow.
- If group conversation goes sideways while sharing, gently guide the group back to the circle so everyone can have a chance to share.
- Use discernment, use discretion, and always come from a place of LOVE.

Host Aspirations

Humbly walk with God: “He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8 NIV).

Obey the teachings of Christ: “Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me” (John 14:23-24).

Seek God wholeheartedly: “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart” (Jeremiah 29:13).

Turn to God: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord” (Acts 3:19).

“The eyes of the Lord search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him...” (2 Chronicles 16:9a NLT). All we ask of our hosts is that they aspire to cultivate a heart that is fully committed to God. This does not mean a host is a perfect person, but it does mean they seek to align their life with the expectations God lays out in scripture, to submit their ways to him, and to turn from the sins he reveals and to do right. Jesus tells his followers, “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40 NIV) Loving God and loving others is a daily habit, just like praying and spending time in God's word are. We encourage our hosts to practice these daily habits because our hope is for hosts to grow closer to God each day and slowly day by day, year by year, watch the fruits of the spirit abound in their lives: “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Host Agreements

By agreeing to be a Sinking Deep host:

- I commit to following Jesus Christ the risen savior with my whole heart.
- I commit to the “HOST” aspirations listed up above.
- I commit to showing up EARLY each week I host.
- I commit to following the “Hourly Flow” provided for me.
- I commit to checking in with attenders I have not seen recently.
- I commit to inviting one friend to begin this group with me.