

Session I: Spiritual roots

1-8 SEP

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BNF3rpZUDU>

How do the four functions of roots relate to your own spiritual life?

Key thought

Christian maturity, stability and fruitfulness are the fruits of deep roots in the love of God.

Key verse

'blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD... They will be like a tree... that sends out its roots by the stream' Jer. 17:7-8

Discussion starters

1. Why is Christian maturity intentional and not accidental?
2. What is the difference between conversion to Christianity and cultivating Christianity?
3. How do you cultivate your own soul?
4. How much of your life is influenced or based on superficial things?
5. How can we align ourselves with the will of God?
6. Should Christians be optimists or pessimists?

7. How has the depth of your relationship with God helped you through issues and troubles?
8. Is faith more evidenced in daylight or darkness?

The example of Jesus

'And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.'
Luke 2:52

Prayer pointers

- Pray that, as we explore this issue together, the Holy Spirit will give us understanding of its principles and the courage and ability to put them into practice.
- Pray that people will deepen their roots in God and receive fulfilment from Him and produce spiritual fruit for Him.

Session 2: Eating the Bible

9-17 SEP

Icebreaker

What are your favourite foods?

Key thought

Just as physical food is essential for our bodies, so the Bible is essential for us to survive and thrive spiritually.

Key verse

'So I went to the angel and asked him to give me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take and eat it."' Rev. 10:9

Discussion starters

1. Where do you choose to obtain nourishment for your soul?
2. How may experiences have restricted the development of your spiritual roots?
3. How has your thanksgiving and worship in a time of trial produced greater faith?
4. What do the years of your life in God say against the hours of uncertainty?
5. Describe how remembering scripture from the past has helped you in the present.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the quote of John Stott on 14 Sep?

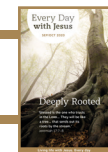
7. What is the difference between reading the Bible and inwardly digesting it?
8. How has the Bible formed your mindset and moulded your character?

The example of Jesus

'It is written... For it is written... It is also written... For it is written...'
Matt. 4:4,6,7,10

Prayer pointers

- Pray for greater understanding as you read the Bible.
- Pray for anointed teachers to inspire young people to read their Bibles.



Session 3: Appetite for Scripture

18-27 SEP

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IbUwasudt70>

What is your normal practice of reading the Bible?

6. How is the Bible different from other sources of information?
7. Have you become more suspicious and cynical as you have become older?
8. How have you benefitted from reading the Bible?

Key thought

Our desire to read God's Word and obey is a major factor in our Christian maturity and depth of our spiritual roots.

The example of Jesus

'Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"'
Matt. 4:4

Key verse

'when you received the word of God... you accepted it not as a human word, but as ... the word of God' 1 Thess. 2:13

Discussion starters

1. How do people see the Bible?
2. What is the difference between Shakespeare, Agatha Christie and Jeremiah?
3. What are the roles of the human and divine in the Bible?
4. How may we determine if the Bible is a closed or an open book to our understanding?
5. What percentages of human life depend on logic, experience, intuition and revelation?

Prayer pointers

- Commit in prayer to reading and studying God's Word on a regular basis.
- Commit in prayer to obeying what you have read particularly about forgiveness and trust in God.

Session 4: Root of Prayer

28 SEP - 4 OCT

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aoQISJBNRJw>

How, where and when do you tend to pray?

Key thought

Our spiritual life tends to flourish or weaken in relation to our commitment to pray regularly.

Key verse

'pray continually' 1 Thess. 5:17

Discussion starters

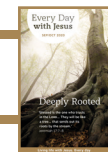
1. How has prayer benefitted you?
2. Why may prayer be a form of superstition?
3. How has God spoken to you?
4. How has prayer overcome difficult circumstances in your life?
5. Is your light bulb usually on or off?
6. How has prayer awakened your spiritual life?
7. How has the prayer life of Jesus inspired you?

The example of Jesus

'But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed' Luke 5:16

Prayer pointers

- Ask the Holy Spirit to inspire and strengthen you as you commit to pray regularly.



Session 5: Steps to Prayer

5-12 OCT

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAkmV-1POKU>

Should prayer be completely format free or follow a series of steps?

Key thought

Just as we use steps to journey from a lower level to a higher level so there are steps in prayer that can lead us closer to God and deepen the root of our prayer life.

Key verse

'The Sovereign LORD... wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.' Isa. 50:4

Discussion starters

1. What may hinder you in your prayer life?
2. What may hinder God speaking to you?
3. Which prayer steps are most appropriate to you?
4. Why is prayer about more than a shopping list of needs?
5. How can we focus our prayers to experience communion with God?

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7. What would you choose as a motto?
8. How has God answered your prayers?

The example of Jesus

'This, then, is how you should pray...' Matt. 6:9

Prayer pointers

- Take time to focus on God as your loving Father not just your willing provider.
- Express thankfulness for what God has provided for you.

Session 6: The Holy Spirit

13-17 OCT

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNNZO9i1Gjc>

What is your experience of the Holy Spirit?

Key thought

The Holy Spirit is not merely an influence or force but God in action, and that action is often in the form of empowering those who believe in Him to do more than they otherwise could on their own.

Key verse

'I will pour out my Spirit on all people.' Joel 2:28

Discussion starters

1. Are you puzzled by any parts of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?
2. Are you in any way afraid or wary of the Holy Spirit?
3. How are Jesus and the Holy Spirit alike?
4. At what stage is your understanding and experience of the Holy Spirit?
5. Do you and your church emphasise the Holy Spirit enough?

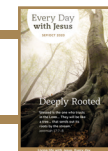
The example of Jesus

'the Holy Spirit descended on him' Luke 3:22

'Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit... was led by the Spirit' Luke 4:1

Prayer pointers

- Thank the Holy Spirit for His role in your life.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit will fill you and your church.



Session 7: Desiring the Holy Spirit

18–23 OCT

Icebreaker

Watch: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SXRKleLKPFs>

What do you think is meant by the phrase 'seek the Holy Spirit'?

Key thought

It is not possible to live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit or to experience His fullness without desiring Him deeply.

Key verse

'And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.'
Acts 4:31

Discussion starters

1. To what extent is the Holy Spirit working in your life and the life of your church?
2. How determined are you to experience all the Holy Spirit has to offer?
3. Do you squeak and need oiling?
4. How do we reach out to the Holy Spirit?
5. Are you a cautious Christian or a bold believer?
6. Why may we live as though we are Old Testament believers?

The example of Jesus

'Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit' Luke 4:14

Prayer pointers

- Pray for a new anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray again!

Session 8: More of the Holy Spirit

24–31 OCT

Icebreaker

Review what you have so far learnt about the Holy Spirit and how He has touched your life.

Key thought

The anointing of the Holy Spirit is a gift and cannot be earned. Yet the experience of His presence and power is not automatic because it needs to be sought with determination and desire on a daily basis.

Key verse

'... how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!' Luke 11:13

Discussion starters

1. How can we be full yet empty?
2. On a scale: are you barren, complacent or complete?
3. Are you a leaver or a stayer?
4. On a scale: are you devoted, dedicated or surrendered to the Holy Spirit?
5. Discuss the differences between the pagan heart and the Christian heart.
6. Why is Christian growth not automatic when you become a Christian?

7. How do God and you work together for greater fruitfulness?
8. What has most impacted you in our studies and how will you change as a result?

The example of Jesus

'Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty come to me and drink... By this he meant the Spirit"' John 7:37,39

Prayer pointers

- Pray the prayers of 30 Oct and 31 Oct in EDWJ
- Ask the Father for more of the Holy Spirit.