

Begin a New Life

Six-Week Program for Small Groups

Week 3 Group Meeting

Step 3: Pray to the Lord

Leader Guide

Meeting notes:

1. For a full description of how to run this meeting, go to the *Begin a New Life* website (www.BeginaNewLife.info) ⇒ *Group Activities* ⇒ *Six-Week Small Groups*. Scroll down and click on the *Overview of Weekly Meetings*.
2. This outline is an example of a one-hour meeting that starts at 7:00 PM. Groups that want more time for *Group Sharing* can lengthen that part of the meeting and adjust the meeting's end time accordingly.

7:00 PM Opening activities

1. Opening prayer
2. Readings:

Hear my cry, O God;
Attend to my prayer.
From the end of the earth I will cry to You,
When my heart is overwhelmed;
Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
For You have been a shelter for me,
A strong tower from the enemy.
I will abide in Your tabernacle forever;
I will trust in the shelter of Your wings. (Psalm 61:1-4)

The smallest amount of divine power is enough, every time it is called on, to tame instantly the entire devil's gang, even if it consisted of millions. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Secrets of Heaven*, paragraph no. 8626)

The power to resist sins, when prayed for, is never denied anyone, but is granted to all. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Charity*, paragraph nos. 203, 204)

People who believe in God say to themselves, "With God's help I will conquer this." And they pray for it and obtain it. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Charity*, paragraph no. 203)

The Lord's constant effort to reform and regenerate us, and so to purify us from evils, is realized when we will and intend it. (Emanuel Swedenborg, *Charity*, paragraph no. 203)

3. Check-in
 - a. One highlight from each person's day or week, or one opening comment.
 - b. No cross talk or conversation during this part of the meeting.
 - c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with the words, "Thank you," before moving on to the next person.
 - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
4. Group business
 - a. Any announcements or group decisions that need to be made.
5. Task for this meeting (to be read out loud)

Step 3: Pray to the Lord

 - a. Do *one* of the following:
 - 1) Using a new set of worksheets, go through all four steps of the *BNL* process for the issue you're working on.
 - 2) Using a new set of worksheets for Steps 1-3, go through those steps for the issue you're working on.
 - 3) Review the Step 1 and Step 2 worksheets you've filled in so far, then go through a Step 3 worksheet for the issue you're working on.
 - b. Come to the next meeting ready to share your experience of Step 3 of the *BNL* process—*Pray to the Lord; Beg for His Help and Power in Resisting Your Sin.*

7:15 Group sharing

1. People share their experience of doing the task. Sharing is initiated by the question, "What was your experience of doing the task for this week?"
2. Note: In the event that sharing lags, there is a set of additional questions that can help. It appears at the end of this meeting outline. As group leader, you can listen during *Group Sharing*, decide which questions you think would be useful for the group, and ask them when appropriate. (Note: Some of the questions may have already been answered during initial sharing.) Continue in this way as needed until *Group Sharing* is over.

7:45 Closure

1. Task for the next meeting (to be read out loud)

Step 4: Begin a New Life

 - a. Do *one* of the following:
 - 1) Using a new set of worksheets, go through all four steps of the *BNL* process for the issue you're working on.
 - 2) Review the Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 worksheets you've filled in so far, then go through a set of Step 4 worksheets for the issue you're working on.
 - b. Come to the next meeting ready to share your experience of Step 4 of the *BNL* process —*Begin a New Life.*
2. Leader for the next meeting
 - a. If the group will have multiple leaders, decide who will lead the next meeting.

3. Closing comments
 - a. One closing comment per person.
 - b. No cross talk or conversation during this part of the meeting.
 - c. Acknowledge each person's contribution with the words, "Thank you," before moving on to the next person.
 - d. Groups larger than eight are broken into groups of four to eight.
4. The Lord's Prayer
 - a. The group stands, holds hands, and says *The Lord's Prayer* together. Those who prefer to listen may do so.

8:00 End time

Additional Questions for Sharing

1. What is your experience of needing help from someone else and asking for it?
2. What is your experience of needing help from *God* and asking for it?
3. What does the word *prayer* mean to you—how do you define it?
4. What was your experience of prayer when you were a child? What is your experience of it now? What value, place, or importance does it hold for you now?
5. What is one way that you pray, or one thing that you *do* when praying, that is helpful and effective? What does it accomplish?
6. As you went through Steps 1, 2, and 3 of the *BNL* process, what was your state of mind as you departed from Step 2.3 (*Confess your sin before the Lord*) and entered Step 3 (*Pray to the Lord*)? What value did this state of mind hold for you in the process?
7. What thoughts or feelings do you have around “pleading” or “begging” for the Lord’s help and power? Please explain.
8. What was your experience of turning to the Lord and asking for His help and power in Step 3? How easy (or difficult) was it to do so? Please explain.
9. Were there barriers that you experienced to praying/begging for the Lord’s help and power in resisting your sin? If so, what were they? How did you address them?
10. The prayer that you said and/or wrote during Step 3 was a prayer for the Lord’s “help and power in resisting your sin.” What do “help” and “power” mean to you? In other words, what are you personally praying for when you pray for “help” and what are you praying for when you pray for “power”? What do you hope the Lord will *do* or *provide* in each case?
11. There’s a quotation at the bottom of the Step 3 worksheet which says, “The smallest amount of divine power is enough, every time it is called on, to tame instantly the entire devil's gang, even if it consisted of millions.” This statement suggests that any time you call on the Lord to help you during times of spiritual conflict, trial, or temptation, there is a powerful effect that He can have. In general, what is your experience of calling on the Lord's divine power in time of need? How do you do it? What happens when you do? Describe one experience you’ve had with this and what impact it had.
12. Are there any other thoughts, feelings, or insights about this part of the process that you’d like to share?
13. What meaning or value did Step 3 of the process hold for you?