



MCG
Study Guide
Core Practices
June 13th – 19th

Prayer Requests:

Wednesday June 13th – Eating Together

Reading: Psalm 68:6 – 8

God sets the lonely in families...”

It may seem shocking to you but a whopping 67% of Canadians eat alone.¹ And while there may be times when this is unavoidable studies show that it really isn't good for us.

The Council of Economic Advisers to the President reported, "The largest federally funded study of American teenagers found a strong association between regular family meals (five or more dinners per week with a parent) and academic success, psychological adjustment, and lower rates of alcohol use, drug use, early sexual behavior, and suicidal risks."

In addition to the social and psychological benefits, the research shows that children ages nine to fourteen who have regular dinners with their parents "have more healthful dietary patterns, including more fruits and vegetables, less saturated and trans fat, fewer fried foods and sodas, and more vitamins and other micronutrients." More and more research is showing that family meals also may be one of the most important protective factors in preventing childhood obesity. A study by The Ohio State University found that "pre-school aged children are likely to have a lower risk of obesity if they engage regularly in one or more of ...

¹ <https://www.msn.com/en-ca/video/news/67percent-of-canadians-eat-alone-but-studies-show-benefits-of-a-shared-meal/vp-BBDrsJ1>

specific household routines," and the first routine mentioned was eating dinner together as a family.²

One of the practices that MCG's encourage is table fellowship. It is not simply about eating, it is about shalom; helping to bring a sense of peace, health, joy and well-being into our neighbourhoods. Clearly, statistically, it goes against the flow of culture but as Christians we are called, at times, to swim against the stream.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Make a list of the reasons why you do not invite people to your house for table fellowship?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Discuss these with your MCG and brainstorm how you might remove some of these barriers.

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- **Pray our new recently voted in provincial government officials**
- **Pray for those on your street dealing with loneliness; invite one to the table; keep it simple.**

² Steve Smith, [The Jesus Life](#) (David C. Cook, 2012), pp. 153-154

Thursday June 14th – Hospitable

Reading: Genesis 18:1 – 8

“...he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them...”

Have you ever noticed that you can't spell the word hospitable without a table. In *Outlive Your Life*, Max Lucado writes:

Long before the church had pulpits and baptisteries, she had kitchens and dinner tables. Even a casual reading of the New Testament unveils the house as the primary tool of the church. The primary gathering place of the church was the home. Consider the genius of God's plan. The first generation of Christians was a tinderbox of contrasting cultures and backgrounds. At least fifteen different nationalities heard Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Jews stood next to Gentiles. Men worshiped with women. Slaves and masters alike sought after Christ. Can people of such varied backgrounds and cultures get along with each other?

We wonder the same thing today. Can Hispanics live in peace with Anglos? Can Democrats find common ground with Republicans? Can a Christian family carry on a civil friendship with the Muslim couple down the street? Can divergent people get along?

The early church did—without the aid of sanctuaries, church buildings, clergy, or seminaries. They did so through the clearest of messages (the Cross) and the simplest of tools (the home).

Not everyone can serve in a foreign land, lead a relief effort, or volunteer at the downtown soup kitchen. But who can't be hospitable? Do you have a front door? A table? Chairs? Bread and meat for sandwiches? Congratulations! You just qualified to serve in the most ancient of ministries: hospitality.

Something holy happens around a dinner table that will never happen in a sanctuary. In a church auditorium you see the backs of heads. Around the table you see the expressions on faces. In the auditorium one

person speaks; around the table everyone has a voice. Church services are on the clock. Around the table there is time to talk.

Hospitality opens the door to uncommon community. It's no accident that hospitality and hospital come from the same Latin word, for they both lead to the same result: healing. When you open your door to someone, you are sending this message: "You matter to me and to God." You may think you are saying, "Come over for a visit." But what your guest hears is, "I'm worth the effort."³

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Read through the accounts of Abraham and Lot as they offer hospitality to some visiting strangers found in Genesis 18:1 - 8 and Genesis 19:1 - 3 respectively. Contrast how these men treat their visitors.

Abraham	Lot

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- **Pray for those from NBBC in your area to be hospitable**

³ Max Lucado, [Outlive Your Life](#) (Nelson, 2010), p. 55

Friday June 15th – Following the Nudge**Reading: Acts 9:10 – 10**

“The Lord called to him in a vision...”

Perhaps we would be more responsive to the nudges of God if they came in a vision like Ananias had, but I suspect that even if we had a dream or a vision we would be able to dismiss it and rationalize not obeying. In my experience, obedience to those nudges and prompts of God – however they come to us – will always involve a risk of some type.

Pastor Ted DeHass, tells the following story of following a nudge he got from God:

I made my pastoral calls in the county hospital and walked back to my car in the parking lot. Just as I reached out to the car door to get inside, I heard, "Go see Bob." Bob was a retired fireman, seriously ill with heart problems and confined to a bed because of his ailment. He had recently made a decision to accept Christ and was making wonderful spiritual progress. I took what I heard to be the prompting of the Holy Spirit, but I protested, saying, "I was there not long ago. It's not time yet to go back again." The prompting persisted, so I got into the car, pulled out of the lot, and headed for Bob's place. It was just a few minutes away, up a rural road winding through beautiful, northern California hills.

I came to Bob's house, pulled into the driveway, and looked over to the big front window of the living room where Bob usually lay in a hospital bed.

Bob was lying there, but he looked different. I thought to myself, "He looks dead." I hurried to the front door and knocked. Evelyn, his wife, came to the door breathless and distraught. "Oh, I'm so glad you're here. Bob just died a few minutes ago!"

We sat together in the kitchen, not saying too much to each other as the man from the funeral home did his work in the other room, getting

ready to remove my friend from the home. Quietly, when the time was right, I read from the Scripture, and Evelyn and I prayed, seeking God in the loss of her husband.

I've thought back many times to that afternoon, and I am so glad that I followed the leading of the Spirit. I got there just as someone needed me most.⁴

Following the prompting of the Holy Spirit is never easy and it is likely that sometimes we will get it wrong. That's okay because our attempts count whether or not we see the fruit we hope for. God delights in our obedience regardless.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

What do you think would have happened had Ananias not obeyed God's nudge to him?

Think of a time when you obeyed what you thought was a nudge from God. Come prepared to tell the story at your MCG.

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer requests:

- **What stories can you recall hearing at NBBC regarding following God's nudge? Pray for that and others**
- **Pray for courage and attempts**

⁴ Pastor Ted DeHass, Bedford, Iowa

Saturday June 16th – Following God’s Guidance

Reading: Acts 16:6 – 10

“...but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.”

When I bought a new car I was thrilled that it had a GPS. I am the type of person who can very easily get lost – even with a map. But I love how my GPS can tell me “In 200 meters turn left.” Sometimes we wish there was such clear and detailed direction when it comes to obeying the Spirit of God. Probably all of us, from time to time, have wished for such clarity.

One night as the famous bible teacher F.B. Meyer stood on the deck of a ship approaching land, he wondered how the crew knew when and how to safely steer to the dock. It was a stormy night, and visibility was low. Meyer, standing on the bridge and peering through the window, asked “Captain, how do you know when to turn this ship into that narrow harbour?”

That’s an art,” replied the captain. “Do you see those three red lights on the shore? When they’re all in a straight line I go right in!”

Later Meyer said, “When we want to know God’s will, there are three things which always occur: the inward impulse, the Word of God, and the trend of circumstances... Never act until these three agree.”

I’m sure that God could have made His guidance easier, like a GPS. But I suspect that we would not seek Him nearly so intently if that were the case. More than God desires to lead us, He desires to be with us. When we need His guidance, it forces us to come nearer to God.

It was Christmas, 1939, and Great Britain was at war with Nazi Germany. Like his father before him, King George VI would continue the holiday tradition of addressing the British Empire in a live radio message. Toward the end of his nine-minute broadcast, he said:

“I feel that we may all find a message of encouragement in the lines which, in my closing words, I would like to say to you:”

He then read from a poem given to him by his 13-year-old daughter, Princess Elizabeth,

“I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year,
 ‘Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.’
 And he replied, ‘Go out into the darkness, and put your hand into the
 Hand of God.
 That shall be better than light, and safer than a known way.’”

Discerning the voice of God and the will of God may not be easy, but as the above story illustrates it is well worth the effort to strive to be in the centre of God’s will and leading.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Think through the ways that God has guided you. Make a list of how He as led you in the past:

Consider what these verses have to tell us about God’s guidance:

Proverbs 3:5 – 6

James 1:5 – 8

Proverbs 11:14

1 John 4:1,

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer request:

- ***What part of Scripture speaks to you most as being guided by His Word... pray through that and make it personal***

Sunday June 17th – Spiritual Knockoffs**Reading: Philippians 2****Sermon Notes:****Meditation/Application/Reflection**

As you think about today's sermon what is one action point that you are taking away?

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer request:

- Although it is said that we are imitators of Christ; know that we are not Knockoffs but that we are His!
- Pray for humility and security to come from knowing We are His.

Monday June 18th – Telling and Listening

Reading: Psalm 107:1 -3

“Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story.”

In her humorous TedTalk, Carmen Agra Deedy, says this:

Our children are not getting stories from carbon-based life forms as they once did. Rare is the family dinner where stories are told at the end of the day... Fewer still, the exhausted parents, some working one, two and three jobs who can muster the stamina to tell bedtime stories. And far-flung the grandparents that once lived in multi-generational homes and were the source of wonderful, ridiculous, fantastical and exaggerated tales that were our birthright.

It is not the absence of this art that I fear, it is not that one day we will not know how to tell a story; it is that one day we will no longer know how to listen to one. ⁵

She then asked how many people have been in a conversation with a friend who was telling you a story that they needed you to hear and you found yourself only half listening. Not because we were on a tablet or phone but because our minds were wandering or looking for a place in the conversation where we could insert our own story and reference our self.

Story telling benefits both the teller and the listener. It is nearly impossible to think of going through a day without telling stories it is the way we communicate. We encourage one another through stories, we teach with stories, even this MCG guide is made up of stories; stories which move our hearts with compassion, motivate us to act and that inspire us with ideas. This is why one of our MCG practices is telling stories of our attempts to join God on mission.

⁵ Watch the full talk here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=265&v=pSCef_AYqaA

It is not so much the success stories, but the efforts which often inspires. It is not necessarily the “wins” but it is our ability to identify with and commensurate with the failures of our attempts.

When we tell stories, we narrate the continuing story of the acts of God in the life of His Church. So share the stories of your attempts. Your story telling and listening might encourage you and others more than you realize.

Meditation/Application/Reflection

Take time to go over this past week and think where God was at work, doing something, teaching something, directing, comforting, answering prayer. How might you tell about that activity of God to others. Consider coming and telling a story of God at work in your life this past week.

Prayer Points:

As you pray for your church family, community, MCG and yourself, please remember these prayer request:

- **Pray for our students in these last few weeks of school**
- **Find another posture to pray in today: pray for the children of NBBC that they would know and experience that they are a part of the church and play a significant part.**

Tuesday June 19th – The on-going story

Reading Acts 11:1 – 18

“Peter told them the whole story.”

One of the mysteries to Bible scholars is the peculiar way in which the book of Acts ends. It seems as if it doesn't quite finish. This is what is recorded:

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance!

The most common theory for not having a proper, formal ending to the Book of Acts is because the story goes on. You and I today carry on the work of the Apostles who were "sent forth" to preach Jesus and His Gospel, that is not to say, of course, that you and I have the office of 'Apostle' - quite obviously not - but that the business of disseminating the Gospel goes on and that book cannot close during this age of the Church.

This theory has some merit after all in 2 Corinthians 3:2,3 we read:
You yourselves are our letter, written on our hearts, known and read by everyone. You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

If God is writing his letter in us, then a big part of how He is writing is the stories that He uses to shape our lives and character. Can you imagine if archeologist discovered one of the missing letters spoken about in the New Testament? Letters that might shed more light on Jesus and the early church? Wouldn't you want to read it and find out what it said?

When we fail to tell our stories to one another, to others outside of the church, or even to tell them to ourselves – taking time to recognize

what God is doing in our lives – it is as if we are withholding a precious treasure. A story from God. MCG’s are a great place to practice telling stories. In the passage we read today about Peter we find that God directed the church and the whole Christian movement through a story. How might our stories be used of God to direct us?

Preparing for your MCG

As you come for you MCG be prepared to share:

- POTLUCK: Be mindful about a story you might share regarding the importance of MCG regular group meeting together. (ie. What it means to you, or how the group has seen God work through them or in them)
- STUDY: Share from your time of Meditation/Application from each day study. What from chapter 5 of Daniel made an impression on you or what confused you.
- PRAYER WALK/ACTIVITY: be creative and intentional as you pray/work together.

Prayer Request:

Record the prayer requests that are shared at your MCG to inform your prayers this coming week.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Missional Community Group (MCG) Covenant

We desire to grow as followers of Jesus who represent Him and His Kingdom well in all of our life. We recognize that God's plan is for us to grow in and through relationships with other like-minded disciples. As those who identify as neighbourhood missionaries we enter into this covenant so that we might be transformed by God's grace and that together we might be transforming agents in our neighbourhood.

To this end, this year, we therefore covenant to:

- Meet regularly for weekly encouragement, accountability, and fellowship in our Missional Community Group and corporately with all of NBBC.
- Seek to grow in likeness to Jesus by engaging in NBBC MCG's shared practices.
- Nurture loving relationships within our Missional Community, accepting others as Christ has accepted us.
- Faithfully steward the resources that God has given us: time, abilities, resources and energy.
- Together discern where God is at work and join Him in His mission to bring the Kingdom of God to our neighbourhood.

In all that we covenant, we recognize that we are dependant upon the grace of God to enable us and so we joyfully enter this covenant in hope of what He might do in and through us.

Missional Community Group Shared Practices

1. Daily engage in reading Scripture and pray for God to bless NBBC in its missional calling.
2. Weekly purposely and intentionally bless another person.
3. Monthly practise table fellowship with someone in your Missional Community.
4. Respond to the Spirit's prompting as you sense Him leading and directing.
5. Share with others the stories of what God is doing in your life as opportunities arise.