



P.O.W.E.R. GROUPS
DEFINED

PRAYER

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:9-10

Communication with God through prayer is one of the most exciting components of P.O.W.E.R. group. Praying for and with one another is the foundation of all spiritual relationships. Because the death of Jesus Christ has reconciled God and man, God calls believers everywhere to “draw near” to Him (Hebrews 4:16; 10:19-20). Your P.O.W.E.R. group has the privilege of responding to this call of God each time you meet together. In fact, this is the purpose for which God has called each of you to salvation. According to John 15:16, you were chosen by God so that you could make your requests known to Him in prayer. He has made each of you his sons and daughters because He as your Father desires to commune with you, hear your needs, and answer according to His will. Prayer is the response of believers to the gospel. It is essential specifically to the P.O.W.E.R. group structure for several reasons.

The early church has set a clear example. In the first church meetings recorded in the Bible, followers of Christ “devoted themselves” to prayer (Acts 1:14). Prayer was one of the express purposes of the first gatherings of believers. They did not simply “open in prayer,” then commence with their meeting—it was an integral part of their fellowship. Likewise, in your P.O.W.E.R. group, prayer should be more than a convenient way of getting everyone’s attention so you can begin your meetings.

Scripture challenges believers to pray for one another. In James 5:16, God explicitly instructs Christians to pray for one another. Elsewhere in the New Testament, the church is called on to bear one another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) and to continue steadfastly in prayer (Colossians 4:2). I Thessalonians 5:17 commands believers to “pray without ceasing.” This instruction obviously implies that prayer must occur both inside and outside your P.O.W.E.R. group meeting. Challenge your group members to “be constant in prayer” (Romans 12:12) for one another throughout the week. The prayer in your regular group meetings should mirror what the members have been privately practicing the previous week.

Prayer is vital for the other components of a P.O.W.E.R. group. Openness will never be possible if the members of your group cannot trust you to pray for the needs they reveal. Before studying the Word, believers must humble themselves in prayer before its Author. Expressing that you are praying for a member of your group is perhaps the greatest Encouragement you can offer. Prayer is also one of the key Responsibilities as a member of a P.O.W.E.R. group.

How to Biblically Pray in P.O.W.E.R. Group

Pray with God’s purposes in mind. Someone has defined prayer as “thinking God’s thoughts after Him.”¹ A vital aspect of biblical prayer is aligning our thoughts and goals with the

¹ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Prayer and the Knowledge of God: What the Whole Bible Teaches* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 60-61.

purposes of God expressed in His Word. In Christ's model prayer in Matthew 6:10, he prays that God's "will be done." When you pray in your P.O.W.E.R. group, keep the focus on what the Scriptures already reveal about God's heart for His people. For example, before approaching the weekly Bible study, pray specifically that God would use His Word to change your hearts. When you pray this, you are praying in accord with God's expressed purpose for the work of His Word (Isaiah 55:10-11). Another way to pray toward divine goals is praying for the unsaved to come to Christ. God desires that sinners repent and believe the gospel (2 Peter 3:9).

Praise God for one another. In your prayers, both corporate and private, thank God for the members of your P.O.W.E.R. group (Philippians 1:3-5). Praise Him for the work of the gospel in their lives. This is how the Apostle Paul prayed for his fellow believers (Ephesians 1; I Thessalonians 1). Your P.O.W.E.R. group should model Paul's example of identifying the "fingerprints" of God on the lives of other Christians and verbally praising God for them.

Pray for spiritual needs. In Ephesians 1 and 3, Paul prayed primarily for the spiritual well-being of his children in the faith. He was certainly not unconcerned with their physical needs, but he acknowledged that the greatest request he could make was that their faith and knowledge of God would grow. P.O.W.E.R. groups should focus on praying for one another's sanctification. Pray that your brothers and sisters in Christ would have strength in temptation (Matthew 26:41). Pray that the Holy Spirit would control them and cause them to live worthy of their calling in Christ (Galatians 5:16-25; Colossians 1:9-12).

Pray for personal needs. The church is a body and a family. When one member rejoices, the whole family rejoices; when one weeps, the family weeps with him (Romans 12:15). Praying for one another's personal requests is part of focusing on the interests of others more than on your own (Philippians 2:4). It is also part of God's call for believers to bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2). As a P.O.W.E.R. group, consistently pray for the requests of the members in your group. Follow up by asking about these needs when you see one another.

Practical tips for prayer in your P.O.W.E.R. group

- ◆ Schedule time in each meeting for prayer (Matthew 7:7-8; Philippians 4:4-8).
- ◆ Bring a quote or a Bible verse about prayer to each P.O.W.E.R. group meeting, using that truth as the emphasis of your prayer time.
- ◆ Pray through a passage of Scripture (The Psalms; Colossians 1; Ephesians 1; Romans 15).
- ◆ Encourage/Insist that the group lift one another in prayer (Galatians 6:2; James 5:16; Hebrews 13:18). Make a group prayer list and email it weekly to the P.O.W.E.R. group.
- ◆ Get together individually with members of your group to pray with them.
- ◆ Follow up on prayer requests. This is encouraging and shows mutual care and faithfulness.
- ◆ Study and pray prayers from a prayer book such as *The Valley of Vision*.
- ◆ Avoid using all of the "prayer time" sharing requests and stories from the week. Instead, lead the conversation so you have adequate time to spend praying together.
- ◆ Avoid pressuring people, especially visitors, to pray aloud. The mission of P.O.W.E.R. groups is encouragement, not embarrassment.
- ◆ Avoid mundane ritual. *Plan* the prayer time, and implement a variety of formats and emphases. Feel free to ask another group leader, one of your pastors, or a Cross Impact leader for ideas.

OPENNESS

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. James 5:16

Openness should characterize the attitude of the POWER group member, and POWER group meetings should be a place where openness is facilitated and encouraged. POWER group members need to be open about their own sin, and foster an atmosphere of confidentiality and transparency with everyone in the group. By openness, we mean *open communication and transparency concerning one's past and present struggle with sin, both in victory and defeat.*

Openness is vital to the Christian life because it directly attacks the deceitfulness of our inherent sinful nature. We, as sinful creatures, like to hide. You see this in the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve tried to cover up their nakedness with makeshift leaf garments... and people have been fashioning their own leafy garments ever since. As with Adam and Eve, the only way we can truly cover our nakedness is be covered by the sacrifice that God alone provides. There's a striking parallel between the animals that God slew in the Garden to cover Adam and Eve's shame (Genesis 3:21) and the Messiah who was slain by God to cover our shame. We are now clothed in the robes of Christ's righteousness (Isaiah 61:10), and should no longer need to feel the pressure to cover our own sins.

The prime example of hiding sin in the Old Testament is King David and his sin with Bathsheba; not only did he voyeuristically gaze upon Bathsheba, but then committed adultery with her, deceived her husband, and then had him killed. His prayers, after being exposed by the prophet Nathan, give us insight into what it feels like to hide our sin - *Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah (Psalm 32:2-5).* David knew that hiding sin from others and God will take away any chance of spiritual and meaningful fellowship.

So, why then are we supposed to be open with other Christians? Why can we not just confess our sins before God? The Christian life is to be lived out between you and God, but it was never intended to be lived in isolation. There are plenty of anemic, spiritual hermits out in the world who don't see the importance of spiritual encouragement... but these people are ignoring what the Scripture says (Eph. 4:16). In James 5:16 we are told to "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another." This means that we are to be openly and honestly dealing with sin. Our confession of sin to others has nothing to do with our **forgiveness** before God, but as noted in the context of James is supposed to lead to prayer for one another. Another important passage where we see open confession of sin is in the Ephesian believers: "And many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices" (Acts 19:18). These people had previously been practicing magic secretly, but now openly "confessed and divulged their practices." It is important to note here that these people were doing this openly so that "the name of the Lord Jesus [would be] extolled" (Acts 19:17). The word of God was being openly

proclaimed by Paul to these believers, and as it was working in their lives they were moved to openly confess and forsake their sinful practices.

Openness in P.O.W.E.R. Groups

Be transparent about struggles with sin. We are told in Galatians 6:2 to “bear one another’s burdens,” so the implication is that we are to share our burdens for our fellow believers to bear (hence we have the E in the P.O.W.E.R acronym, which we’ll talk about later). We need to confess our sins to one another, not for forgiveness, but so that others can pray for you. So, how are we to be open about our struggles with sin? This means sharing those sins that are a constant battle to us, such as pride, lust, or anger. When you are open about these sins, remember to be specific enough so that your group will know how to pray for and encourage you (e.g. “lust in a specific area, anger with a specific person, pride in a certain subject). Vagueness can be a mask, so learn to strip that mask away and rightly reflect your struggles. However, do not be so open in your struggles that it leads to a glorification or graphic description of sin. (If someone is struggling with sin of a graphic nature, seek out a mature believer in your church who can be involved with one-on-one counseling)

Don’t be a hypocrite. Everyone, if they are honest about it, is in a battle with the flesh (see Romans 7). Yet in the spirit of the Pharisees, some would rather cover sin up rather than admit to struggling with sin. Many people come to church and to Bible studies with a mask on, masquerading as a perfect Christian while having sin hidden deep in their heart. We are fearful to confess our sins to one another, because we’d like others to think that we’re naturally and genuinely good people. Jesus caustically reprimands the Pharisees for such an attitude. “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt. 23:26-27).

Be humble. Being honest about sin with our brothers or sisters in Christ takes great humility. This has two aspects: first of all, humility is required for being truly open. We are laying ourselves and our sins bare for others to see. Your POWER group is going to know that you’re not perfect; they’ll know where the chinks in your armor are. Second of all, humility is required when others are being open about **their** sin. When others share sin struggles with the group, you’ve got to be committed to lifting them up and not comparing themselves with your struggles. Never think in your heart: “At least I’m not like that!” (Luke 18:10-14).

Pray for one another specifically. Being open about sin struggles should stimulate us to specific, laser-guided prayer. After prayer requests are through, you should know how to pray for your POWER group members effectively and fervently (James 5:17).

Time is needed to build trust: Being open about sin struggles is going to take concentrated effort on the part of everyone in the group. Those more spiritually mature should provide a model of openness, even in being honest about shameful struggles in their past which could provide encouragement to those weaker in the faith (Rom. 15:1, 1 Cor. 6:11). Over the semester and year, ask specific questions from the passages that you are studying to provide your group time for open discussion. Spend some time in a close, informal environment to allow time and space for group members to be open and honest.

WORD

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.” Isaiah 55:10-11

The Word of God, the Bible, is the center and core of spiritual maturity. It is God’s chief means of sanctifying believers. Therefore, the study of the Word is essential and primary to P.O.W.E.R. groups, which are designed as a venue for Christians to edify each other to grow in sanctification. As a group leader, you have the opportunity to verbally teach the Word to the members of your group. Most of you would agree that the Word should be a significant part of Christian fellowship, but what underlies this emphasis?

The Word is the revelation of God. This is the foremost reason for emphasizing the Bible in P.O.W.E.R. groups. The Scriptures are what God wanted us to know about Himself and about His plan to glorify Himself through redemption. They were breathed out by God as holy men wrote His words (2 Timothy 3:16).

The Word is true. Christians are assaulted daily with lies from the world and especially from our own flesh. This “battle for truth” takes place in our minds daily. Lies about God, sin, and ourselves are the seed thoughts of every sin. The Word of God is the weapon that God uses to help us think on things that are true (Philippians 4:8). Life should not be based on subjective feeling or deceiving intellectualism, but on God’s trustworthy Word (Mark 12:24; John 8:31-32; Hebrews 4:12; I Peter 1:19-21). We can place great confidence in the Word because it is without error and always proves true (Psalm 18:30).

The Word is necessary for life. Spiritually speaking, the Word of God is the food for a growing believer. Christ said, “Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). I Peter 2:2 speaks of the Word of God as “pure spiritual milk” that is necessary for Christian growth. Just as physical life is sustained by food and water, believers’ spiritual lives must be nourished by continual exposure to the Word of God. This exposure is not for the sake of mere knowledge. Rather, God’s Word teaches us, rebukes us, corrects us, and instructs us in righteous living (2 Timothy 3:16-18).

The Word is sufficient. The Bible provides God’s answers to life’s questions. This does not mean that in the pages of the Bible you will find exact solutions to every specific twenty-first century problem. It does mean, however, that God has given us in His Word everything we need for knowing and obeying Him. Through the lens of Scripture, we see ourselves and others clearly. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 promises that believers who study and practice the inspired Word of God will be “complete” and “equipped for every good work.”

Group Bible Study

Cross Impact provides Bible study resources for your P.O.W.E.R. group. These studies allow your group to read and meditate on a specific passage of Scripture over the course of each semester.

The key to effectively using these resources is your personal preparation as the P.O.W.E.R. group leader. This planning stage should begin before the semester starts. Pray through the assigned passage, asking God to transform your mind and actions through His Word. Use a commentary or a study Bible to begin studying the passage itself thoroughly. Also survey the context surrounding the passage and look for the author’s main theme. In addition to pre-semester planning, your weekly preparation throughout the semester is essential. The

P.O.W.E.R. group leaders' editions of the Bible studies will give insight into each lesson. However, be sure to personally dig into the passage; do not simply rely on the answers provided. As you study each lesson, ask yourself the following four questions.

- (1) *What is the main theme of this passage?* Summarize the passage in one sentence. This central point will give you direction as you lead the discussion during your P.O.W.E.R. group meeting.
- (2) *What does each verse mean?* As you prepare to teach and discuss this material, realize that the questions that arise in your mind will likely come up in your group discussion as well. Study well enough to answer them.
- (3) *How does this passage fit into the overall story of the gospel?* You will find meaning and application in all Scripture as you learn to plug it into the overarching story of God's redemption and restoration of creation for His glory. Ask yourself where the passage fit into this story. The ideas you write down will be great talking points in your group discussion.
- (4) *How does this passage apply to my life and the lives of my group members today?* Scripture demands a response. Stress this point both in your personal encounter with the Word and in your group discussions. As the leader of the group, you should be leading your members in applying Scriptures to their day-to-day lives (2 Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:11-14).

Once you have prayed over and prepared the lesson, you are ready to lead the discussion in your P.O.W.E.R. group meeting. A key benefit to the P.O.W.E.R. group structure is adaptability. Deciding the pace and format is your responsibility as the group leader based on the needs and maturity of the group members. Here are a few suggestions to help you as you lead the Bible study.

- ◆ Plan to spend most of your average meeting time in Bible study.
- ◆ Encourage the members to complete the study material in advance, using the questions mentioned above, so that they are ready to participate.
- ◆ Begin by reading the passage of Scripture aloud.
- ◆ Read the text of the study material, stopping to discuss each paragraph.
- ◆ Use cross references to demonstrate how the themes of this lesson are seen throughout Scripture.
- ◆ Remember that most of the questions are intentionally open-ended. Allow for more than one correct answer. Do not assume that your answers, or even the notes printed in the leaders' editions, are the only possibilities.
- ◆ Share specific ways that this lesson has convicted you in your life.

Personal Accountability

In addition to completing and discussing the group Bible study, P.O.W.E.R. group members have the opportunity to keep one another accountable in personally studying and memorizing the Word of God. Your goal is to create a culture that embraces accountability within the group. This occurs both by sharing what you are learning and by asking the members about their personal interaction with the Word. Many people in your P.O.W.E.R. groups may have never consistently read the Word or are not currently reading it for themselves. As the P.O.W.E.R. group leader, take advantage of the opportunity to come alongside them in their walk with God. *Suggest* practical helps such as scheduling an "appointment with God" each day, following a reading plan, and keeping a journal. *Recommend* resources that have been helpful in your study of the Bible. Take time in your meetings to *model* how to personally study the Word. In addition to helping your P.O.W.E.R. group read the Word for themselves, *challenge* them about memorizing the Word. The group Bible study passage is a great place to begin. Encourage your group to memorize one or two verses each week, with the goal of memorizing the entire passage by the end of the semester.

The Word of God is powerful. God has promised that it will be successful in accomplishing His work. You can be confident in this promise as you study the Word for yourself and prepare to teach it to others. Ask the Lord to make you a reservoir of the water of the Word. This will happen as you continually receive the Word, allow it to soak into your life, and let it overflow into the lives of those in your P.O.W.E.R. group.

ENCOURAGEMENT

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25

It is of the utmost importance for believers to encourage and exhort one another in Christ, and it is through the first three letters of P.O.W.E.R. that you primarily perform this spiritual task. The theme of encouragement is a very rich subject in the scriptures, and its full meaning is based on the Greek word *parakaleo* (*παρακαλεω*). The word etymology literally means to call (*kaleo*) from beside (*para*). Believers are to come alongside our brothers and sisters and call them to Christlikeness. The word is richly translated in the English language into two primary aspects: encouragement and exhortation. As we will see, both aspects are vitally important to the spiritual effectiveness of P.O.W.E.R. groups.

The modern usage of the word 'encouragement' has the connotation of being optimistic or positive, but a Biblical study of the word shows a far deeper meaning. The encouragement that we see in the Scriptures is not only a message of hope, but also a call to action based on that hope. First, we need to consider what we derive our encouragement from:

- 1). We are to encourage one another **because** of the Salvation that we have in Christ (1 Thess. 5:9-11)
- 2). The Scriptures were written **for** our encouragement (Romans 15:4)
- 3). We are to encourage one another **because** Christ is coming again (1 Thess. 4:13-18 and Heb. 10:24-25)
- 4). We are to encourage one another **by** our deeds (2 Cor. 7:7, Col 4:8)

The ministry of *parakaleo* that we have with other believers has aspects of encouragement and of fervent exhortation. We should be able to take what we learn in the word and exhort one another based on the truths of Scripture. The word of God demands a change in us, and we are called to exhort our brothers and sisters to respond to that life-changing Word. Really, there should a sense of urgency in our exhortation, because becoming like Christ is of utmost importance! We are exhorted to "present [our] bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1), to "strive together" in prayer (Romans 15:30), and to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling" of God (Eph 4:1). We're told to "stir up one another to love and good works... encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:24-25). We must "exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

One figure in the New Testament models the attribute of encouragement and exhortation for us, so much so that he is called "the son of *parakalesis*." Barnabas, one of the original converts of the apostles (first seen in Acts 4:36-37), built his ministry around encouraging and exhorting. In Acts 9, we see Barnabas being the first one to reach out to the persecutor-turned-preacher Saul of Tarsus. Barnabas risked his own life to encourage Saul and introduce him to the apostles. A couple chapters later, Barnabas is called up to Antioch to preach to the new believers there, and it's said that "when he came and saw the grace of God, he was glad, and he **exhorted** (*parakaleo*) them all to remain faithful to the Lord with steadfast purpose" (Acts 11:23). In the very next verse, we see him traveling 80 miles to get Saul from the city of Tarsus... he didn't have to go get Saul, but Barnabas made a conscious decision to trust and include him in the ministry. Barnabas consistently went out of his way to encourage others in ministry, even deciding to risk his ministry again by encouraging the deserter John Mark and giving him a second chance (Acts 15:36-41).

How to Biblically Encourage/Exhort your P.O.W.E.R. Group

*Encourage your group by **praying** for them:* You must be praying for the fellow members of your group. It is very encouraging to know that your fellow believers are lifting your needs up to God on your behalf. Paul exhorts the Roman believers to “strive together with me in your prayers to God on my behalf” (Rom. 15:30). Just as Paul needed those prayers on his behalf, so we also need others to pray for us, and this will encourage us. He also exhorted Timothy that “supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people” (1 Tim. 2:1); it’s clear from this passage that the prayers of others are essential for us to live a godly life.

*Exhort and encourage your group members in those areas that they are **open** in:* As was already emphasized in the section on openness, your group should not be open for the mere sake of being open, but so that encouragement and exhortation can take place! If one of the group struggles with lust, you should encourage them that area. See how things have been going, keep them accountable in that area, etc. Possibly another will struggle with anger; point them to specific areas of scripture that deal with a righteous response to frustrating situations. When you see areas of growth in these areas, be quick to encourage them! If you see them sliding back into old sin patterns, exhort them to not be “hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:13).

*Use the **Word** to encourage and exhort:* Remember that your individual words hold little weight, but God’s words hold absolute sway on a believer’s life. Why use a pocket knife when you have a double edged sword? Use God’s word as the “living and active” sword that it is; let it “pierce to the division of soul and spirit...discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12). It is such a powerful weapon that must be wielded with Spirit-led hands. Use the Word to exhort and to encourage.

Encouragement and Exhortation are ongoing activities: Hebrews 3:13 shows us the importance of the now – “Exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Is this day called “today”? Then it is a day that we are commanded to exhort and encourage one another.

Leaders: Open yourself up to encouragement and exhortation from others in your group: Leaders are not exempt from getting encouraged and exhorted by the group. They have spiritual needs also, and should be open to both aspects of *parakaleo*.

Practical ways to encourage and exhort:

- ◆ Leaders: Meet with your group members one-on-one to learn their sin struggles or confront them on specific issues that you are burdened to talk with them about.
- ◆ When spiritual progress is made, make sure to highlight this for encouragement
- ◆ You can split your group into two’s as specific accountability partners
- ◆ Intentionally text your group members to see how they are doing in a particular area
- ◆ Write a note to them (a physical letter or an email) to encourage them
- ◆ Keep up with how your member’s family situation is back at home, encourage them as needed
- ◆ If you’re wondering whether you should approach them about a spiritual matter, pray for wisdom and even seek pastoral counsel if needed, but do not be afraid to confront or exhort

RESPONSIBILITY

“This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”

1 Corinthians 4:1-2

P.O.W.E.R. groups will function properly when its leaders and members are committed in their spiritual growth, in their ministry, and in reaching others. Mutual trust and concern for one another is established when members take ownership of their responsibilities within the group. Responsibility is looking at the P.O.W.E.R. group structure and saying, “Yes, I commit myself to that.” Some of the specific responsibilities as a group leader or member are as follows.

Spiritual Commitment

Pursuing Christ passionately is your first responsibility. This is not a promise to be perfect--we are all still growing. This is, however, a desire to consistently walk with God. You must read the Word of God and talk to Him in prayer often, and the local church should have a prominent place in your life. The passions of your life should closely align with the desire of God for your life, namely your sanctification. Without a personal walk with God, your ministry to others will be dry and stagnant. But as you walk with Him daily, your spiritual leadership will be overflow. As God works in your own heart, your love for Him will pour over into the lives of people around you.

Gospel Sharing

You have been called as a believer to use the God-given opportunities to bring others (classmates, co-workers, roommates, family members, random strangers) to the Savior. As you discover the camaraderie, accountability, and fellowship in P.O.W.E.R. group, God will more deeply burden your heart for those who know have never experienced the joy of Christ and of fellowshiping with Christians. Your eyes will begin to see lost souls and their need for salvation. God has ordained all believers to be His messengers, proclaiming by their words and by their lives that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). One of the purposes of Cross Impact is to reach college students with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the life and witness of those students who have experienced God’s grace in salvation. P.O.W.E.R. groups are designed to collectively participate in this mission in several important ways.

- ◆ *Vision.* As a P.O.W.E.R. group leader, you are to set before your group a vision in their hearts for sharing the gospel. This is accomplished largely by your personal excitement and passion about reaching the unsaved. A vision for sharing the gospel is *caught* more than it is *taught*. Your P.O.W.E.R. group will *catch* your concern for people if you have a sincere burden. Cultivate this burden by personally praying for the lost around you, taking advantage of opportunities to speak of your faith in Christ, and studying the example of Christ’s compassion. Both in your personal time with God and in P.O.W.E.R.

group, examine passages such as Matthew 9:35-38; 14:14; 28:18-20; Mark 6:31-34; Acts 1:8.

- ◆ *Training.* Fear prevents many believers from sharing their faith in Jesus Christ with others. Sometimes this fear stems from an absence of clear teaching about how to give the gospel in a cohesive, understandable way. Take time in your P.O.W.E.R. group to teach, first of all, the core truths of the gospel. Also discuss suggestions and tips that you have found helpful in sharing the truth of Christ with others.
- ◆ *Participation.* In addition to the group members' personal opportunities to share the gospel, your group can collectively work to give the gospel to others. You can schedule a time for your group to walk around campus, probably in groups of 2-3, in order to meet people, share with them about Cross Impact, and tell them about the Savior. Many organized outreach ministries (such as International Day or an evangelistic campus event) need groups of volunteers to preparation and execution. These events are great opportunities for your P.O.W.E.R. group to come together for the purpose of sharing Christ.

Mutual Concern

This means not being afraid in asking tough questions, not being afraid to really get down to issues that group members are struggling with. Much of the philosophy underlying this point is covered in the section on "Openness." One of your responsibilities as a P.O.W.E.R. group leader (or member) is to cultivate true compassion for your fellow group members. Real encouragement and openness will take place only when each member confidently knows that his brothers or sisters are sincerely concerned with his needs, spiritual and otherwise.

Time

Dedicate yourself to this opportunity of ministry and set aside your time and effort towards meeting with your group to encourage each another spiritually. Commitment to P.O.W.E.R. group admittedly requires time. It will take sacrifice to plan group meetings, complete the weekly Bible study material, attend group activities, pray for fellow members, and participate in other Cross Impact functions. But the rewards are more than worth your investment of time and resources.