

CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

real hope

a series in 1 Peter



Series Overview

~~real hope~~

April 16	1 Peter 1:1-25	<i>... and joy</i>
April 23	1 Peter 2:1-10	<i>... on a firm foundation</i>
April 30	1 Peter 2:11-3:7	<i>... and submission</i>
May 7	1 Peter 3:8-22	<i>... and goodness</i>
May 14	1 Peter 4:1-19	<i>... in suffering</i>
May 21	1 Peter 5:1-14	<i>... with humility</i>

CONNECT GROUPS

At ACN, the primary avenue for **discipleship** is in a **Connect Group**, and we **encourage everyone** to be involved because these groups are specifically designed to help us **grow** as disciples. Connect Groups help us to **connect with each other**, **connect with the Word** and **connect with God** through **prayer**.

We need time to **relate** to one another by connecting personally. Depending on the members, this can be done in a variety of ways. As we get into the Word, we **examine** its **truth** and **relevance** in order to apply it to our lives. Scripture is **explored, explained and discussed**, and the goal is to minister to each other's lives through what is learned, not necessarily to finish all the material.

Prayer is a vital part of a Connect Group's time together. Leave plenty of time so your prayer is not rushed. This is not just an 'opening' or 'closing' prayer, but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God, in a simple and conversational way. This is where the action is! The goal is to create a space where people feel enabled and comfortable to pray, and can see God at work.

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER

This is a letter written to churches not unlike ours, at a time not unlike ours.

A time when there was great potential to be maligned, mocked and misunderstood because of following Christ. It is a letter about suffering for our faith, helping us to stand firm with real hope because of all that Jesus has done.

Because of who we are in Christ, we will stand out as different, or even strange or offensive. Though the world may deride us, God does not. He has chosen to love us.

This letter was written by the apostle Peter, a close disciple and friend of Jesus, and eyewitness of his resurrection. This is important to remember as we read this letter in the season of Easter. The resurrection is what gives us Real Hope.

It was written to Christians in the region we now call Turkey, where persecution was rife and Christians had to hide. The series graphic is from Cappadocia, and was taken in an underground city where Christians hid from persecution in the early centuries of the Church.

1 Peter 1:1-25

April 16 REAL HOPE

... and joy

INTRO

Share about a time when you have felt marginalised or mocked because you follow Christ.

'Apostle' means 'one who is sent.'

Peter speaks with the authority of the risen King.

*READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START*

1. Talk about what Peter had witnessed, both during Jesus' life on earth and after that. Why does his life make this letter all the more exciting to read?
2. Peter describes the recipients of this letter as elect, exiles and scattered. How would these identities have shaped their view of life, and their view of themselves?
3. What does v.2 tell us about the Father, the Son and the Spirit?

NOTES

A possible route of Peter's letter as it was delivered to the churches



4. vv.3-4 We are to praise God because of who he is, what he has done, and what he is doing.
What has he done, and how?
5. vv.4-5 How do we know we will reach this wonderful inheritance?
6. How might the truths of these verses enable Peter's readers to rejoice even when life was extremely hard?
v.7 What is proved when trials come?
7. vv.10-25 The prophets proclaimed without ever being rewarded with the full revelation of grace.
Share with one another what it means for you to know Christ.
8. Being 'holy' is often a challenge.
What do these things have to do with being 'holy' - hope (v.13), grace (v.13), obedience (v.14), the resurrection (v.18-21).
9. vv. 22-25 How does holiness impact our relationships? and why?

Pray

- Reread vv.3-5 and pray about those truths.
- Ask God to give you this perspective on where you live, when you live and the kind of life you live. Ask that, in good times and bad, you would remember what a privilege it is to be an 'elect exile'.

NOTES

1 Peter 2:1-10

April 23 REAL HOPE

... on a firm foundation

INTRO

If you have built your own home, share a little about the process of drawing up the plans. Did the foundations figure much in your thinking?

OR

As a child do you remember trying to build a tall tower with blocks. What was the secret for going higher?

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START

1. Peter uses the image of Jesus as the living stone. What makes this a positive image for you?
2. What does it mean for us to be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices?
3. In what ways does the metaphor of a cornerstone convey the idea of people either accepting or rejecting Jesus?

NOTES

4. Most people have a positive view of Jesus even if they aren't committed disciples. Is this position tenable? Is it a consistent/valid position to hold?

5. v.9 is very grand. Followers of Jesus are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession. But what does it all mean? Sum up this passage in your own words.

6. v.10 highlights the huge gulf between believing and not believing, and challenges nominal belief. How might we convey to 'nominal believers' the enormity of the step of true saving faith?

7. Our Vision is 'living to love and proclaim Jesus'. In what ways do vv 9-10 provide a foundation for our Vision?

Prayer

- Give praise to Jesus that he is the cornerstone.
- Pray for forgiveness when we have not been living stones being built into the spiritual house God would have us be.
- Pray that we might know the power of Christ's resurrection to live out our status as God's people (v9) and declare the praises of Jesus.

NOTES

1 Peter 2:11 - 3:7

April 30 REAL HOPE

... and submission

INTRO

Aussies have a complex relationship with authority. How do you see it?

Are we rebellious convicts, or submissive, or somewhere in between?

*READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START*

1. What does Peter mean when he calls God's people foreigners and exiles (aliens and strangers in other translations)?
2. What is the purpose of living a 'good life'? What does a good life look like and what does it do?
3. vv.13-17 What is God's will for you?

NOTES

4. Why has God allowed non-Christian rulers and worldly authorities?

5. How is it difficult to respect, honour and submit yourself to human authorities? Who were the human authorities when Peter wrote?

6. Is there anything you need to repent of in how you may not have respected a superior in your life?

7. What difference should it make to your life to consider yourself at home here versus considering yourself a citizen of heaven who is spending some time as a foreigner here?

1 Peter 3:1-8

8. *Bonus questions for people who are, or might get, married*

- a. How is our context similar to and different from the 1st century?
- b. Wives, how are you to act?
- c. Husbands, how are you to act?
- d. What is God's promise to those who live in this way?

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- Pray for wisdom as we all navigate life with worldly authorities and a different set of Christian values

Pray

- Pray that we would submit first to Christ, then to worldly authorities and our lives would point people to the Good Shepherd

NOTES

1 Peter 3:8-22

May 7 REAL HOPE

... and goodness

INTRO

Tell of a time you or someone you know suffered for doing good.

Peter knew about standing firm in difficult situations - remember it was Peter who when confronted on the night of Jesus' arrest denied Jesus 3 times. It was that same, broken, shamed, disappointed Peter who Jesus restored to himself 3 times on the beach after His resurrection. Peter knew the ins and outs of standing firm because he had failed so spectacularly at it and yet was forgiven, welcomed, and graciously restored to ministry by Jesus.

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START

1. How are you going at loving others, being compassionate and humble?
2. How do you think the world would be different if everyone repaid evil with blessing?
How do you think the world would be different if only Christian repaid evil with blessing?

NOTES

3. Doing good doesn't earn us a place in God's blessing. Why does Peter quote Psalm 34:12-16 here? Does Psalm 34:11 help your understanding?

4. What does it mean to 'revere Christ as Lord in your heart'?

5. In the context of this passage, why would someone ask a Christian about their lifestyle, values or beliefs?

6. How are we to answer people who ask us about our hope and trust in Jesus?

Pray

- Pray for growth in Godliness. May God be at work so powerfully in our lives that we stand out in the crowd.
- Pray that when people ask about our values, lifestyle and hope in God, we can clearly direct people to Jesus who is our hope, peace and life.
- Pray also for the persecuted Church around the world.

NOTES

1 Peter 4:1-19

May 14 REAL HOPE

... in suffering

INTRO

What differences do you think there are between 21st century Christianity and 1st century New Testament Christianity?

Though our bodies are 'judged' (they will die and decay), we will live eternal lives 'in the spirit'. i.e. with resurrection bodies. All the more reason to persevere through suffering as we do the will of God!

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START

1. How do materialism and prosperity affect our thinking about suffering in the Christian life?
How can we arm ourselves with the same attitude as Christ?
2. v.4 How will people respond to us as we live by God's will, not the world's?
3. vv.7-11 Why is it exciting to know that 'the end of all things is near'? Reread 1:3-9
What attitude are we to have, and what will the result of that attitude be?

NOTES

4. vv.12-19 If we come to this passage looking for general answers about suffering, we'll be disappointed. If we come for hope and help in our suffering, we'll be greatly helped.

Why is it easy to feel surprised when we suffer because we are a follower of Christ?

5. v.13 How does Peter encourage us to respond when we suffer for living as a Christian?

6. vv.16-19 How should we not feel, and what should we do instead? What does this look like in life for you?

7. Where do you find it most difficult to live 'for the will of God'?

Pray

- Work through these verses, turning each into a prayer
- Pray that you and your church would take this view of suffering, avoiding surprise or shame
- Pray that instead we all may be able to feel joy about whose we are and where we are heading

NOTES

1 Peter 5:1-14

May 21 REAL HOPE

... with humility

INTRO

Think of someone you consider to be humble. Describe this person to the group without naming them. What qualities/behaviours stand out?

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE
BEFORE YOU START

1. What is your definition of humility?
2. What is your definition of leadership?
3. Is it possible to be a leader and be humble? How do vv 1-4 help us to understand humble leadership?

NOTES

4. Is humility a virtue in our society or seen as a weakness?

When is humility valued?

When is humility not valued?

6. vv 8-11 How does being alert to our adversary, the devil, give us a deeper appreciation of humility?

5. Can you think of examples of Christian humility in our society that stand out publicly?

7. What evidence of Peter's humility do we find in this chapter?

Prayer

- Give thanks that God is sovereign, and he has the glory and the power. Come in humility before him
- Pray for leaders to be good leaders and followers to be good followers. Pray for leaders and followers to be humble
- Pray for a sober mind to resist the devil and all his temptations

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~~real hope~~

