

## **Instructions for Conducting a Words of Blessing Meeting**

The Lord's weekly words of blessing that you receive from Mary are great when read individually, but they also provide a wonderful opportunity for small group sharing and reflection. Following are some guidelines for holding your own Words of Blessing meeting.

Ideally, the words should be shared in a group of about four people—but no more than six. You can meet regularly with the same small group or you can host a regular large gathering where each week people are randomly split into small groups to share with different people each time. Either method works fine. Some groups meet each week to share the words, and others meet less regularly and share whatever message is intended for the week.

### **Meeting Outline**

1. Open in prayer, if desired. You may want to have someone read the prayer for the week.
2. Go around the circle and take turns reading the main portion of the message for the week beginning with the Bible verses. Switch readers every paragraph or at logical breaks.
3. When you get to the bulleted mini messages from the Lord, each person should read just one—and that message will be one that is intended specifically for the person who is reading. You will go around the circle with each person reading the next bulleted message. Next to each message, jot down the name of the person for whom it is intended. Keep going until all the mini messages have been “assigned” to someone in the group.
4. When you have gone around the circle several times and have finished reading all of the mini messages, you will go back and link the mini messages into a longer message that will be read back to the appropriate person. For example, if Joe receives messages 1, 5, 9, and 15, another person in the group will read those phrases back to Joe as one longer message. No one should read his or her own message. Instead, sit quietly and just listen as your words are read back to you. Let them wash over you and try to discern the Lord's meaning.
5. After a person listens to his or her combined message, the listener can share with the group how those words fit into his or her life at that moment, how they are an answer to prayer, etc. Other members of the group can affirm the listener and add their own insights about what the message might mean.
6. If there is time at the end, the group can go around the circle again (beginning where you left off assigning the mini messages) and assign the Bible verses that go with the weekly words of blessing.
7. Close with prayer, if desired.

### **Variations and Enhancements**

— If you meet with the same group on a regular basis, before the group reads the new message for the week, each person could give a brief update on how he or she acted on the Lord's words received the previous week. Did you change an attitude? Try a new ministry? Change your spiritual practices? Reach out to someone? How did you use the words during the week?

— The group could share their responses to the question for the week.

— The group could share their plans for doing the action for the week and then report back the next week to share what was accomplished.

— If time is limited (say for a shorter Bible study on a Sunday morning), you could just work with the Bible verses for the week, going around the circle and assigning a verse to each person.

— You may want to keep a journal where you write down all of the messages assigned to you for each week. This makes it easier to go back and reflect on your words and look for repeated themes.

— You could have each person in the group pick one of their individual messages to focus on in the week ahead.