

LEADER'S GUIDE

The
ESSENTIAL
GUIDE
to
HEALING

EQUIPPING ALL CHRISTIANS
to PRAY for the SICK

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and RANDY CLARK



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ORGANIZING AN *ESSENTIAL* *GUIDE TO HEALING* GROUP

From the editors at Chosen Books: You can organize a group study of *The Essential Guide to Healing* in a number of ways. In this section we detail several approaches you can take. Choose the approach that will work best in your situation. Whatever approach you choose, the goal is to guide your participants through the book, workbook and video segments in such a way that both as individuals and as a group, you finish this study with a better understanding of how to engage in more effective healing ministry. The remaining three introductory sections provide additional guidance for preparing for and leading your study group.

The Essential Guide to Healing Kit contains all the materials you need to make that end result a reality for your group. By the end of your time together, your participants will have a solid biblical foundation for the practice of healing and for the belief that as Christians, we all should be equipped to pray for the sick. Healing is part of the good news that the Kingdom of God is near!

It is one thing to understand healing biblically and theologically, however, and quite another thing to engage in healing ministry effectively. Our prayer is that those who go through this study with you will then *go out and do* the things that Jesus did. “Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:8).

Taking that kind of action in response to this *Essential Guide* study will require one more essential component—the presence of the Holy Spirit in relationship with each participant. Make sure to invite the Holy Spirit into your group meetings, and give Him room to work in you and through you as you lead the group through this study. Also make sure your participants pay particular attention to the lessons that talk about how healing ministry is based not on a mechanical formula, but rather on a *relational* process. It is about their relationship to God and their obedience

to the direction of the Holy Spirit as they minister healing to those in need. When your participants get that concept down, nothing will stand in the way of them engaging in powerful and effective healing ministry.

Let's take a look at the different ways you could organize and lead an *Essential Guide* study. As you formulate a plan, ask the Lord for His creativity and direction. Ask Him to show you the best way to put your group together, and follow His lead. The results will be miraculous.

Church Small Groups or Life Groups

Often a church will have small groups or life groups that meet regularly, typically in someone's home. Such groups provide an ideal setting for an *Essential Guide* study. If your church already has such groups in place, you could schedule this study as the topic for the next round of meetings. If small groups are not organized already, you may want to suggest forming some for the purpose of this study. Each group would meet for a total of eleven or twelve sessions (usually once a week) to focus on the material presented in *The Essential Guide to Healing*.

To facilitate group discussion, it works best to have at least four or five people in each small group, with a maximum of ten to twelve. Groups larger than a dozen make it hard for everyone to participate actively by giving input and receiving feedback. You should divide large groups into smaller groups or move toward a church class model (which we will discuss next).

These are the essentials for leading a small group study:

- A place to meet, which could be your home, another home or a meeting place that the church provides.
- Access to appropriate technology. You will need a DVD player, along with a TV or computer large enough and loud enough for everyone to see and hear. (Not everyone will get the most out of the video segments if you play them on a small laptop at the far end of a big room.)
- A committed leader/facilitator who is familiar with the material and who will follow the Holy Spirit's lead as the group moves through the study. This could be an individual or even a team—perhaps husband/wife hosts or two church leaders working together. The leader(s) direct each meeting and call group members or send out reminders about dates and times.
- An outline for group meetings that will keep each session flowing smoothly through the elements that will make up your time together—fellowship, worship, prayer, a video teaching, discussion

and ministry time. (In “Organizing *Essential Guide* Group Sessions” two sections ahead, we provide a sample schedule that would work well for group meetings.)

Once you put these essentials in place, set a date for your first session and start signing people up to learn more about the healing ministry through this study.

Church Classes, Midweek Meetings or Sunday School

Beyond weekend services, most churches offer church classes, midweek meetings or some kind of Sunday school sessions to disciple their membership. These classes cover different topics and change their focus from time to time, and meeting times may vary. Such a class model can lend itself well to an *Essential Guide* study.

Since church classes are usually larger than the average small group, the discussion time may present more of a challenge, but leaders can still encourage some dialogue among the participants. And because of time constraints, you may need to extend the number of weeks to allow sufficient time to work through this study. For example, a larger class could take two weeks to cover each session. One week the class could watch a video segment for a particular session and talk about the principles presented in both the video and the book. The following week, the class could discuss their workbook answers and the video questions involved in that session.

Although a small group is the model we had in mind as we put together this curriculum kit, a class approach certainly can be an effective model to get these principles across to a larger group already accustomed to meeting at a regular time. Our ability to grow in our understanding of healing ministry does not change based on the setting or the size of the group. Do not feel that you will be limited in your effectiveness if you must adopt a classroom approach. If you give the Holy Spirit room to work and follow His direction, you can teach this study well in a variety of settings.

A Church-wide Study

When a church's pastor and senior leadership decide to take the entire church through an *Essential Guide* study, it goes a long way toward building a culture of faith for healing. Weekend sermons can focus on the principles we present in this study, and leaders can show some video clips in the services. Then the church's Sunday school/midweek classes/small groups can all focus on some aspect of the study, perhaps

watching the entire video segments together and discussing the workbook and video questions.

Leadership can present the church-wide approach as *44 Days of Advanced Training in Healing Ministry* (reflecting the 11 sessions of 4 daily studies each in the workbook). Each congregant should be encouraged to make the most of the church-wide focus by reading *The Essential Guide to Healing*, working through the workbook and signing up to participate in some form of group session. (This approach is especially effective if a small group component is added to the overall church focus.)

Before beginning a church-wide study, a senior or lead pastor may want to consider first facilitating an *Essential Guide* small group composed of key leaders in the church. These key leaders would attend this initial study with the understanding that they will become the group facilitators during the upcoming church-wide study. The leaders would then be trained in the principles and practices presented in *The Essential Guide to Healing* so that they can help the rest of the church fully participate in and get the most out of the study.

The church-wide study is a great way to get everyone in a church body moving in the same direction, not only toward understanding healing ministry, but also toward implementing praying for the sick. As people progress through this material and realize that God's heart is for healing, we believe you will see a dramatic increase in words of knowledge for healing and in effective prayer for the sick. We believe you will see this take place both within your church and outside it, in the secular community full of people around you who need a healing miracle—and more than that, who need the good news that the Kingdom of God is near.

The Individual Study Approach

Where there is no group study, class or church-wide focus available to take part in, an individual can use the *Essential Guide* book, workbook and video segments on his or her own to explore with us the importance and power of effective healing ministry.

With the Holy Spirit as teacher and guide, a person can learn from the Scriptures and this material about the biblical and theological foundation for healing, and also about how to implement the Five-Step Prayer Model we present in the final chapter of the book. Again, the Holy Spirit's effectiveness is not limited to a certain group or a certain setting. But if there is a group study to join, we recommend that approach because of the fellowship, encouragement and discussion opportunities such a group provides.

This study was designed for small groups, but it can also be used as an individual study or as a church-wide study.

LEADING AN *ESSENTIAL* *GUIDE* STUDY GROUP

When you follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, format should never replace flexibility. Yet in a group setting, the presence of the Lord is stewarded best in the midst of organization. As the group leader or class facilitator, it will be your job to oversee the practical preparations for your group study. You will be responsible to pray for your group ahead of time, watch over time considerations as you meet and facilitate the flow of the meeting and ministry that will take place. Here are some guidelines that we think will help you prepare to lead this study and minister to each participant.

Prepare with Prayer

Your first step in leading an *Essential Guide* group study involves preparing with prayer. As you get ready to meet with your group for the first time, pray for wisdom and discernment on your part about how to lead. Pray for increased understanding on the part of your participants about the spiritual principles you will be covering regarding healing. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you vision for what this study can accomplish in your life and in the lives of the participants.

Session by session, pray for your meetings ahead of time, and pray for the individuals who will attend. Be ready to entertain questions, and be patient as you guide your group through these materials. For many participants, the idea that we all should be equipped to pray for the sick in effective healing ministry will be new. Beyond that, developing the sensitivity and ability to receive words of knowledge pertaining to healing may also be exciting to them, yet perhaps a little intimidating. And the thought of using something such as the Five-Step Prayer Model will likely be a new concept altogether. Many of the people in your

group will have much to learn, and the Lord is about to do a marvelous work in each of them as you work through these sessions together.

Prepare with Study

Your first exposure to the biblical, theological and practical principles contained in *The Essential Guide to Healing* should not take place in the middle of leading your group. To lead your *Essential Guide* group well, you should be studying the material ahead of time. By the time you meet for a session, we suggest you have already read the Scripture and book readings assigned in the workbook, watched the video segment that goes along with the session and answered the workbook and video guide questions yourself.

In fact, we think you would be wise to work through this entire curriculum kit before taking on a leadership role, so that you are familiar with what is coming in each of the sessions. That will better prepare you to answer participants' questions, and you will also know when to direct the group to put a certain topic on hold until you reach the particular session that covers it. You will gain confidence and assurance in your leadership role when you study the material ahead of time, and you will know where you are going as a group and how you will get there. Be diligent to search out the truths contained in *The Essential Guide to Healing* for yourself before you present them to your group study. When your participants see your familiarity with the material and the practical skill with which you apply it, it will motivate them to be like you.

Prepare on a Practical Level

In addition to your preparation time in prayer and study, you also need to prepare to lead on a practical level. While it is wonderful to focus on the miraculous realm that so often manifests in healing ministry, you cannot be so heavenly minded that you are of no earthly good in attending to the practical details of group leadership. Attending to the practical details will help things go much more smoothly in your group.

After you have chosen your approach from the previous section, determine a meeting place that has sufficient space for your group and appropriate audiovisual equipment for watching the video segments. Make your group setting as comfortable as possible. The more comfortable and practical you make your setting, the more people will look forward to the meetings without being distracted by issues such as not enough seating or inadequate, uncooperative equipment. When you

take care of the practical considerations ahead of time, you minimize distractions and give yourself credibility as a leader.

Once you have the location ready, set a meeting schedule. Pick a time frame when your church calendar is not already full of other special events that will be taking up people's time. Participants will be more committed to attending your group regularly when they are not over-committed in other areas. Check with other church leadership and the pastor(s) to make sure your *Essential Guide* study does not conflict with anything else on the agenda, and then set a starting date. To make the best use of your group's time together, you should plan to follow the eleven-session curriculum consistently and consecutively. (Or you may go through twelve sessions, depending on whether you incorporate a final wrap-up session.)

Once you establish a place and time for your study, pick a day of the week and a meeting time (unless those are already determined in a church class or the like). It is always a challenge to accommodate everyone's different schedules, so choose a day and time that will work best for the majority. You can always consider offering an alternate study at a future date for those unable to attend your current group.

Don't forget to decide ahead of time about other practical matters such as whether your group will include refreshments or will make provision for childcare. Planning ahead in these areas displays good leadership and eliminates a host of potential distractions. (We talk more about the specifics of planning your group time together in the section just ahead, "Organizing *Essential Guide* Group Sessions.")

Prepare to Get the Word Out

For a church-connected group study to succeed, church leadership must get behind it. Make sure your pastor and other church leaders are aware of your proposed *Essential Guide* study and will endorse it. They can help you with the group launch by getting the word out. Use multiple means to let people at your church know that a study group is forming and that they are invited to participate. Here are some possibilities:

- See if you or your pastor(s) can make an announcement from the pulpit.
- Advertise the group on your church's website.
- Post a sign-up sheet in a visible location at your church.
- Print flyers to hand out that describe the study.
- Send out emails to church members.
- Post the event on your church's social media outlets.

- Make personal phone calls to those you sense should be involved in the group.

Prepare Co-leaders or Assistants

Often, people who are good candidates to become co-leaders or assistants will join your group. Once you have a list of the participants' names, prayerfully consider asking someone who is spiritually solid and mature on the list to back you up. He or she could help you during group ministry time or take your place leading the group in the event that you must miss a session.

Also think about which people on the list could assist with the practicalities. Is there someone who enjoys working in the kitchen? Could he or she oversee the refreshments session to session or circulate a sign-up sheet for snacks so that you can attend more fully to the teaching?

Is there someone who enjoys children? Would that person be willing to plan activities for the participants' children? Or could he or she make sure to enlist teens or other helpers to do childcare during the two hours that you meet?

Is there someone on your list who enjoys showing hospitality? Might that person open his or her home to the group meetings and take care of the physical environment for you so that you can attend to the spiritual atmosphere?

You do not need to do everything yourself to lead a successful group. In fact, it might be better if you did not do everything! There probably will be some people in your study group who simply want to come to the meetings, listen and learn, and go home, but others will be more than willing to help out if you ask them. They may even offer to help before you ask. Take them up on it. Let participants invest in the group by contributing their organizational skills alongside yours.

Prepare Your Participants

As participants sign up for your *Essential Guide* study, let them know what to expect and what will be expected of them. A great organizational tool to print up ahead of time would be an information sheet that participants can take home as soon as they sign up. List the time, place and dates of your sessions, along with the materials everyone involved in the group will need. Participants should each have a copy of *The Essential Guide to Healing* book and *The Essential Guide to Healing Workbook*. They will not need to have the leader's guide or the video segments/DVDs unless they plan to lead a group themselves

in the future. You, however, will need both to lead the group. You can purchase all the necessary materials together in one place in *The Essential Guide to Healing Curriculum Kit*.

If your church has a bookstore, inquire about whether the staff can stock *The Essential Guide to Healing* materials during the course of your group study (and beyond). You could also make the necessary book and workbook available for purchase at your sign-up table, or at least have copies on hand for participants to look at so they can find and order the materials online. If you are able, it might also be a good idea to have a few copies of both the book and workbook available for purchase at your first meeting, in case any latecomers who join still need the materials. Get your group off to a good start by letting everyone know how to obtain *The Essential Guide to Healing* book and workbook quickly and easily so that they can get started with the study. With a little forethought, you can help participants show up at your first meeting ready to dive into the study, with the materials they need already at hand.

As they sign up, also let your participants know that *before* the group starts, they should work through Session 1 in the workbook. That is important so that everyone will be on the same page to begin with and you can jump right in at that first meeting. The participants would then continue to work through one session per meeting, studying the material *prior* to each meeting. You might even be wise to consider including a printed syllabus along with the information sheet you hand out. Give both the syllabus and the information sheet to people as they sign up so that everyone can easily stay on schedule throughout your study.

ORGANIZING *ESSENTIAL* *GUIDE* GROUP SESSIONS

As we already mentioned, format should not replace flexibility when you are following the Spirit's lead. Format should, however, provide a foundation from which ministry can flow. If you have a dozen people in your *Essential Guide* study group and have not planned a format for your meetings, you will be pulled in a dozen different directions. As the group leader, it is your responsibility to come to the meetings with a plan in hand, ready to direct the group. You may end up following the plan to the letter in all your meetings, or the Holy Spirit may lead you in another direction in some of the sessions. Either of those is fine, as long as you come ready to start things off with a plan.

Several different elements can make up a group study. Some elements are necessary to this *Essential Guide* study, while others are optional. We believe the necessary elements for this study are an introduction and an opening prayer, a time to watch the video segment, a group discussion in which you talk about the video guide and the discussion questions, and group announcements about what to do to prepare for the next meeting. Optional elements would be a time of worship, a fellowship/refreshments time and a group ministry time.

Pray and think through these elements, and then put together a meeting schedule that incorporates the elements you want to include in your group. What follows is a sample schedule for an evening meeting that includes a few optional elements, along with the necessary ones. You can adjust this sample schedule as needed to fit your group.

Sample Schedule: *Essential Guide* Group Evening Meeting

- 6:15 Leader(s) arrive at the meeting place (a home or other location) to connect with hosts/co-leaders/assistants. Make sure as the leader that you arrive on time. If you run late or come

unprepared, your group members will sense the stress when they arrive. Frazzled, last-minute preparations on your part put the participants on edge and prohibit a sense of peace and readiness. Set a group atmosphere geared toward powerful ministry right from the start by being on time and coming fully prepared.

- 6:15–6:30 Test all AV equipment for video segment viewing and/or worship. Make sure everything is functioning properly. Have a backup plan in case of malfunctions. Check on refreshments and childcare arrangements, if applicable in your group. Review the meeting schedule with your assistants.
- 6:30–6:40 Pray together for the meeting ahead. Possible prayer directives could be that the Holy Spirit would be welcome to move and minister freely; that the teaching and materials would connect with and bring truth to all your participants; that you as the leader and also your assistants would be sensitive to the Lord's direction; that group conversation and discussion would be edifying; that there would be a transparency and a close bond among group members; that your participants would apply the lessons they learn; and that testimonies would come forth of the power of God at work through this study.
- 6:40–7:10 Do a final check to make sure you and your location are ready for the evening. Welcome group members as they arrive. Direct them to refreshments if those are available, and make sure everyone has a comfortable spot. Encourage some fellowship among group members before the teaching begins.
- 7:10–7:20 Bring everyone together, along with their *Essential Guide* books and workbooks. Welcome the group and briefly review which session and topics the meeting will cover. Pray for the evening aloud, or ask a group member to pray.
- 7:20–7:30 Worship time (if applicable). Have someone lead one or two worship songs as you welcome the presence of the Lord at your meeting.
- 7:30–7:50 View the video segment that goes with the session you are covering. Suggest that group members answer the video guide questions (fill in the blanks) in their workbooks as they watch the video.
- 7:50–8:20 Discussion time. Briefly comment on the video segment and provide the answers to the video guide in the workbook. Begin a dialogue that includes the session discussion questions in this leader's guide. Read the session questions aloud one by one since the participant workbooks do not contain them, and ask group

members for their comments. If time allows, also ask participants if anything in the session or in the book itself leapt out at them. Did they find any ideas that were completely new to them? Did the session cover anything that brought them new understanding of a Scripture? What did they learn that might prove helpful when they engage in healing ministry? Process this session's principles together in your discussion time, perhaps wrapping up with some comments about how participants can take what the group has studied and apply it both in the Church and in the secular arena to minister health and wholeness to people in need.

- 8:20–8:30 Bring the meeting to a close by reviewing which workbook session the participants should work through in preparation for the next meeting. Offer a closing prayer. If time allows, also offer an opportunity for ministry to take place. You could invite group members who want to take part to stay, and dismiss the rest.

CHECKLIST FOR *ESSENTIAL* *GUIDE* LEADERS

One or Two Months Ahead

- ___ Have you determined the approach that is best suited for you to use for your *Essential Guide* study? (If not, see the section titled “Organizing an *Essential Guide to Healing* Group.”)
- ___ Have you determined a start and end date for your session meetings and checked your church calendar for possible conflicts? Have you picked a day and time that will allow for the most participation?
- ___ Have you secured a meeting place that will accommodate your group size? Does the location have proper AV equipment in good working order?
- ___ Have you begun to advertise the *Essential Guide* group study through your church and any available social media? Have you prepared a sign-up sheet?
- ___ Have you determined how and where to purchase materials and ordered your copies? (Remember that you can get everything you need to lead a group study in *The Essential Guide to Healing Curriculum Kit*.) Do you have purchasing information ready for participants since they will need to buy or order their *Essential Guide* book and workbook ahead of time?
- ___ Have you put together an information sheet to hand out to people who sign up for your group? It should list the meeting dates, time and location, as well as the materials group members will need and where they can get them.

- ___ Have you considered putting together a syllabus to hand out that can act as a reference guide, so that all your participants know what to expect and what they will need to do in preparation for your group meetings?

Two to Four Weeks Ahead

- ___ Do you have *The Essential Guide to Healing Curriculum Kit* in hand? Are you going through the material to familiarize yourself with it prior to leading your group study?
- ___ Have you read over the sample meeting schedule in the previous section, “Organizing *Essential Guide* Group Sessions,” and have you adjusted the schedule to fit the group you will lead?
- ___ If your meeting schedule will include optional elements such as worship, refreshments or childcare, have you considered finding an assistant (or more than one) to help you oversee those areas?
- ___ Have you considered enlisting a co-leader, a spiritually mature believer who can help you in each session during ministry/prayer time and possibly lead a group meeting in the event of your absence? Is your co-leader also going through the material ahead of time in preparation?

One Week Ahead

- ___ Have you contacted those who signed up for your group to make sure that they remember the starting date/time and are ready for the group to begin?
- ___ Have you asked your participants if they have purchased the *Essential Guide* book and workbook? Have you reminded them that it is important to go through Session 1 in preparation for your first meeting?
- ___ Have you double-checked all your AV equipment to make sure everything is in good working order? Do you have a backup plan in place in case anything malfunctions?

One or Two Days Ahead

- ___ Have you reviewed Session 1 in the leader’s guide, book and workbook so you are ready to lead the group and handle questions and

comments? (It would be wise to review pertinent sessions a day or two prior to each meeting.)

____ Have you contacted any assistants who are overseeing worship/refreshments/childcare to make sure everything is in place?

____ Have you put all your materials together in one spot so you are ready to walk out the door on time on your first meeting day?

First Meeting Day

____ Have you allowed yourself sufficient time to arrive early at your meeting place?

____ Have you looked over your meeting schedule carefully so you have the order of events in mind for the evening? (Keep in mind that the flow of ministry is facilitated by organization.)

____ Have you put on the full armor of God today? Then you are ready to go forth in power to equip your participants through this *Essential Guide* study to go forth themselves and do the things that Jesus did, particularly through the ministry of healing.