

## PRAYERFUL REVIEW OF THE MEETING

Take time to reflect prayerfully on the evening. Invite people to be aware of God and suggest a short silence to reflect on these questions before sharing on them:

- \* **What was good for me in this meeting?**
- \* **What would I have liked to be different?**
- \* **What am I taking away with me?**

### CLOSING PRAYER

You may like to say the CLC closing prayer:

**Dearest Jesus,  
Teach us to be generous,  
To serve you as you deserve to be served,  
To give and not to count the cost,  
To fight and not to heed the wounds,  
To toil and not to seek for rest,  
To labour and to ask for no reward  
Except that of knowing  
that we do your holy will.  
Amen.**

### PRAYING THE 'BENEDICTINE' WAY

*Some of these leaflets will invite you to pray an epistle, a psalm, a CLC General Principle or an article. 'Aids for Prayer' in the welcome leaflet explains how to begin (with stillness, the preparatory prayer and the grace) but here is one way of praying a text.*

**READING:** After you have prayed the grace, start reading slowly until something strikes you. Then stop. For the moment the **Reading** is finished.

**SAVOURING:** Let the words you have chosen continue to speak to you. Say them again and again as if God is saying them to you. Try not to think, just let them speak to you. If you have chosen a sentence, it may be that after a while you need only to savour one or two words. When the words have really spoken to you, and your heart is overflowing, you are ready to move on.

**HEART TO HEART:** The focus now shifts to your response. Let your overflowing heart express to God whatever it is feeling. It may not need words; it may be enough just to stay in God's presence relishing all that you have experienced. So the heart might wish to say thank you for a list of things that it now knows came from God or it might prefer just to stay feeling grateful.

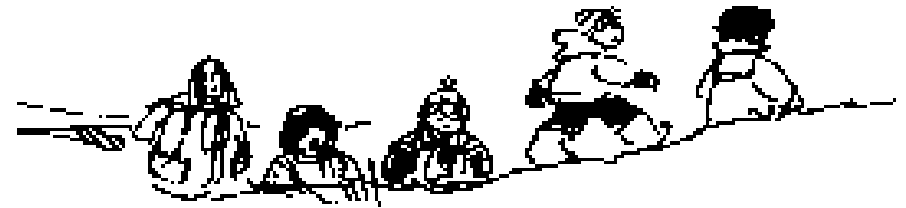
Only move on when distractions make it hard to stay quietly with God. Then go back to **Reading** until another group of words draw you to stay with them.

*Just as there are different ways in which people visit a fairground or an art gallery, so there are different ways of using this method. Some will start by wanting to see everything and only then decide where they want to spend their time. Others will stay with the first thing that attracts them and then move on to the next - and maybe will not see everything the first or even second time.*



MEETING PLANS FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

# STARTING OUT TOGETHER



**PLEASE READ THE  
INTRODUCTORY  
LEAFLET BEFORE  
YOU BEGIN**

**AT THE  
FIRST MEETING**

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# THE VERY FIRST MEETING

*This leaflet assumes that you have already had an information evening. This very first meeting is for those who have decided to try CLC for a few meetings. You may not even know who is going to turn up tonight! The following suggested meeting plan tries to help you know each other a little better and*

*points to the various things you will need to sort out before the end of the evening. So this will not be a 'typical' meeting - and because everyone is new and may well be nervous, flexibility will be particularly important as you move through the meeting.*

## BEFORE THE MEETING

Look at the welcome leaflet for tips about how to arrange the room etc and for how to run a listening group. Ensure that you have enough copies of the leaflets: 'Welcome'

and 'Hopes and Dreams - towards the second meeting' as you will probably need to give these out to everyone during the evening. And put the kettle on!

## AS PEOPLE ARRIVE

Some groups end with a cuppa and some begin with one, but for this meeting we suggest it will relax people if you start with a cup of tea or coffee. Offer biscuits too, by all means, but avoid being elaborate.

This evening will set a bit of a pattern for future meetings and not everyone can afford posh biscuits or cake or whatever. Keep it simple.



## OPENING PRAYER

When most people have had a cuppa, suggest that you start the meeting. For tonight, keep it very simple. Light the candle and suggest that you have a few moments of silence, just being aware of the Lord with you. After a minute or two (use a watch if you need to), you may like to say the CLC opening prayer - or you may prefer to use your own words:

**Show us, Lord, what we should do,  
and help us as we do it,  
so that our prayers and works  
may begin from you,  
and through you meet with success.  
Through Christ, our Lord,  
Amen**

## INTRODUCTIONS

*You may feel you know each other well, but you are about to deepen your trust and form a community, so take time to introduce yourselves. It's also important if you have someone at the meeting who doesn't know everyone else quite so well.*

First of all, just to dispel any trace of nervousness, take it in turns to talk about your name. Why were you given it? What do you feel about it? What would you like to be called by this community?

When everyone has had a chance to do this, suggest a few minutes of silence for people to think about what else about themselves they would like to share with this community. Tell people that you will say when the silent time is up.

After five minutes (use your watch), say that you will now take it in turns to speak; you will simply listen to each other - no one is to interrupt



## PRACTICALITIES

There is a lot of sorting out to do! First of all, are you too many for one group? (For a beginning group, ten is the maximum.) If so, can you divide according to where people live? (That is often helpful, although you may prefer not to do that.) Otherwise, unless there is an obvious division, move on to the other decisions you have to make and see if they help.



How often will you meet? (Most groups choose fortnightly, some weekly and those who meet every three weeks rarely survive.) Will you meet in the evening, or during the day? In each other's homes? (Be aware that some people, eg with small children, may need the meeting to be in their home, and others may not be able to offer their home.) What day of the week will you choose?

What will you do in your meetings? We recommend that you use these leaflets but check that everyone agrees. Remind people that the leaflets assume everyone will try six meetings (after tonight) before deciding whether to continue or not.

or comment. (If necessary, intervene to stop this happening.) Ask if someone would like to start - or if you know someone wouldn't mind, ask him or her to start. It's better if your sharing doesn't come at the beginning or at the end, but if no-one begins to share, then you may need to start the ball rolling.

When everyone has shared, you may like to end this reflective time by inviting people to give thanks to God, saying the *Glory be* or the Lord's prayer together.

(Obviously, if someone wants to leave before then, they are free to do so, but ask him or her to *tell* the group and not just stop coming.)

Have you anyone in mind for Group Guide? (If this is a new concept, leave it alone for now and talk to the Regional Chaplain or Regional Officer)

If you are going to use these leaflets, give out 'Welcome' and 'Hopes and Dreams - towards the second meeting'. Explain that the inside pages contain material for prayer before the next meeting and encourage people to try its suggestions, even if they are new to praying with images. (Not all the meeting plans suggest drawing your prayer or finding a symbol.)



Where will the next meeting be and who will lead it? (It shouldn't be you, as you've led this meeting!) Remember that it is helpful if the leader is not the host.