MIRACLES

A Journey with Jesus — from His Life to Yours

LEADER GUIDE

CONTENTS

KEYS FOR SUCCESS		2
How to Use Your Leader Guide		3
How to Lead a Great Small Group		5
WEEKLY SMALL GROUP GUIDES		9
WEEK 1-Chapter 1	What Happens in the Storms of Life?	11
WEEK 2—Chapter 2	From the Outside In	17
WEEK 3-Chapter 3	Waiting on a Miracle	23
WEEK 4-Chapter 4	Miracles with Friends	29
WEEK 5-Chapter 5	Finding Jesus in Our Deepest Pain	35
WEEK 6-Chapter 6	The Second Fire	41

KEYS FOR SUCCESS



How to Use Your Leader Guide

Your *Miracles* Leader Guide has everything you need to lead a successful Small Group. Each week of your guide contains two parts.

PART 1: PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Review this section early in the week to help prepare for your next Small Group meeting. It includes points on:

- What to Communicate
- What to Pray
- What to Expect

PART 2: LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

Use this section to lead your Small Group meetings. Read through the section in advance so you can be prepared. As you read, make notes in the margins and select the questions and prayer points you would like to cover. This section includes:

WARM-UP AND INTRODUCTION

Begin each week by discussing an easy warm-up question and then reading a short introduction to help focus everyone's attention on the topic of the lesson.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

This section provides questions for your Small Group to discuss. The questions are also included in the appendix of the *Miracles* book. Encourage your Small Group participants to turn to this section in their books during your Small Group meeting.

Spend time looking through the discussion questions ahead of time. This will create the richest discussion during your group.

Finally, don't feel pressured to discuss every question. Select the ones that seem most appropriate for your group, and give everyone plenty of time to share their thoughts. If you don't get through all the questions, that's okay.

PRAYER

Praying together is one of the greatest privileges of a Small Group. This section will give you prayer points to help focus your group's prayer time. Also, use this time to take prayer requests and pray for each other's needs.



How to Lead a Great Small Group

The next six weeks in your Small Group will be incredible! Here are some practical tips to help you lead a great group.

ONE: PRAY

It may sound obvious, but praying for your group is the best thing you can do. Your Leader Guide provides prayer points each week to help focus your prayers. Remember, your prayers don't have to be long. Just try to be consistent and watch what God does!

TWO: PREPARE

Preparation is key to a successful group. Consider the following:

• Always communicate with your group before and after you meet. Follow the points in your Leader Guide to know exactly what to communicate every week.

- Make sure your meeting location is clean and tidy. If you're meeting in a home, play soft worship music in the background while people arrive. Providing snacks is also great. If you have pets, be sure they are out of the way.
- Get others involved. Don't do everything yourself. Ask your group to help organize and bring snacks each week. Bringing snacks will create a sense of "ownership" in the group. Remember, someone who signs up to bring a snack is more likely to show up for the group. Look for other ways to involve your Small Group. Can someone bring a fun ice-breaker question next week? Can someone send out prayer requests to the group? Can someone plan a fun outing? The more you involve your group, the more committed they will be.
- Read through your Leader Guide and review the discussion questions each week before you meet. This will help you familiarize yourself with the content and give you the chance to select the questions that will be most helpful for your group.

THREE: FOLLOW A SCHEDULE

Following a consistent schedule each week is important. Try not to let the group run long. Here is a simple 75-minute schedule you could follow:

- Meet, Greet, Mingle (15 minutes)
- Warm Up and Introduction (5 minutes)
- **Discussion** (45 minutes)
- **Prayer** (10 minutes)

FOUR: FACILITATE, DON'T TEACH

Your goal as a Small Group Leader is to facilitate a great discussion and draw out the contribution of others. A successful group is one where every person shares. As a facilitator, aim for an 80/20 ratio—where 80% of the talking is done by group members and only 20% by you.



WEEKLY SMALL GROUP GUIDES



WEEK ONE

CHAPTER 1 WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STORMS OF LIFE?

Found on pages 31 - 43 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Your Small Group kicks off this week! Focus on fostering connection. Here are some tips to help you prepare for your first meeting.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Contact everyone in your Small Group a few days before the group starts to remind them of the key details (day, time, location, childcare, etc.).
- Let everyone know you are praying for them and you're excited for the group to begin.
- Tell everyone to read Chapter 1 of *Miracles* before your group meets, so you can discuss it. If someone doesn't read the chapter, that's okay, but reading ahead of time will provide the best discussion.
- If anyone wants to go an extra step, encourage them to look at the Small Group discussion questions in the appendix. This will help people process the content and prepare for the Small Group discussion, but this step is completely optional.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray that God would bring the people to your group that He wants there. Trust His hand in forming your group.
- Pray that everyone would feel comfortable and that friendships would begin to form at your first meeting.
- As you've stepped out to lead a Small Group, pray and believe that the Holy Spirit will be with you and will help you.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The first week of your Small Group is always exciting! If you have a new group, you might not know who will show up. Contacting each person beforehand is a great practice. Some people may be joining a Small Group for the first time. If so, they might feel nervous or excited. Plan on spending 10-20 minutes breaking the ice with everyone. Have snacks ready when people arrive and spend time getting to know each other. Setting out name tags for everyone is also a good idea. Before you start the Small Group discussion, go around the room and have everyone share a little bit about themselves (name, family, job, hobbies or interests, etc.). Prepare a couple of fun ice-breaker questions that everyone can answer. These questions should be fun, easy to answer, and help people connect. Spend extra time this week getting to know each other, even if it shortens your discussion.

Week 1 begins with a common topic: fear. We'll focus on a story about the disciples caught in a storm. They're afraid for their lives while Jesus is asleep. Some people in your Small Group might relate to how the disciples feel. Sometimes when we go through difficult seasons, it can feel like God has forgotten about us. Give people time to talk about their experiences, frustrations, and fears, and encourage your group that God is still in control. He never forgets us, and He always works for our good.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 1 WHAT HAPPENS IN THE STORMS OF LIFE?

WARM-UP

What's an irrational fear you've had at some point in your life?

INTRO

We all have things that make us afraid. Whether big or small, real or imagined, fear is a common part of life. But does it have to be? Today, we are going to talk about the types of fears we have and what God wants to do in us when we feel afraid.

PASSAGE

Read Mark 4:35-41 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 1 discussion questions found on pages 131-135.

- 1. What things do people commonly fear?
- 2. What role does fear play in our culture? Is it big or small?
- 3. How do you typically respond to fear? Do you fight, run, or close your eyes and hope it goes away?

- 4. What is a better way to respond to fear?
- 5. Read Mark 4:37-38. What is Jesus doing while the disciples are afraid? What does this reveal?
- 6. In verse 38, the disciples ask Jesus a telling question, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Have you ever faced a situation that made you wonder if God still cared about you? Explain.
- 7. When we face fearful situations, what is God trying

APPLICATION

What is the greatest challenge you're facing right now, and what is your greatest fear surrounding that challenge?

How does God want you to respond to the situation?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application questions above.
- Pray for everyone in your Small Group to trust God more and to grow in their relationship with Him.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK TWO

CHAPTER 2 FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

Found on pages 45 - 59 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Your second week is all about continuing to make connections in your group. Here are some helpful tips as you prepare for your second meeting.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Follow up personally with each person who came to your group (text, phone call, or personal email). Thank them for coming and invite them back for Week 2. This is the most important thing you can do this week.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- Encourage everyone to read Chapter 2 of *Miracles* in preparation for your next meeting.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray that everyone would come back for Week 2.
- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your first meeting. Be sure to reach out to anyone this week who had a prayer request and check in on them.
- Pray for anyone in your group who might be struggling with rejection or feeling like an outsider. Pray that God's love would provide breakthrough.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You have the first week wrapped up! Follow up personally with everyone in your Small Group, and you should have a good idea of who will be at the next meeting. You might have some new faces, so plan a fun ice-breaker question again to kick things off and help everyone get to know each other better. Spend time laughing and snacking. At this point in your group, connecting is still your number one goal.

Speaking of snacking, remember that you don't have to provide snacks yourself every week. Instead, ask the people in your group to sign up each week to bring something. This does more than lighten your load. It gets everyone in the group involved. Plus, people who sign up, show up!

Week 2 touches on those who feel marginalized. While we've all experienced moments where we've felt this way, some people struggle with feelings of rejection at a deeper level. The story of Jesus healing ten lepers is a powerful reminder that God wants to reach everyone, especially those who feel like they are on the "outside." Give people plenty of time to talk about their personal experiences and about how to reach others who might feel marginalized.

The discussion also focuses on the role of obedience when receiving a miracle. This lesson is not saying that the absence of a miracle means someone has disobeyed God. However, encourage people that sometimes God's miracles happen on the backside of our obedience.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 2 FROM THE OUTSIDE IN

WARM-UP

Have you ever been in a situation that made you feel marginalized or like you were an "outsider"? What was that like?

INTRO

We've all experienced moments when we've felt marginalized, and many people feel like that on a continual basis. The good news is that Jesus came to reach those who felt marginalized, rejected, and on the outside. Today, we will look at the story of ten lepers who received healing from Jesus in an unusual way, and we'll apply their story to our lives.

PASSAGE

Read Luke 17:11-18 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 2 discussion questions found on pages 137-141.

- 1. Read Luke 17:11-13. Why would it have been difficult for ten lepers even to approach Jesus?
- 2. What are some examples of modern-day "lepers" or outcasts in our culture? What should our response be to those who feel marginalized and mistreated?

- **3.** Read Luke 17:14. How do you think the ten lepers felt when Jesus told them to show themselves to the priest before they were healed?
- 4. Why is obedience sometimes tied to a miracle?
- 5. Has God ever asked you to do something uncertain or risky? What was it, and what happened as a result?
- 6. Read Luke 17:15-16. Why does only one of the men come back to thank God? Why do you think the other nine did not return?
- 7. How quick are you to thank God when He blesses you?

APPLICATION

What is something you are most grateful to God for right now?

What is something you will do this week to express your gratitude to God for His blessings?

PRAYER

- Pray for everyone in your Small Group to cultivate an attitude of thankfulness to God.
- Pray for anyone who is struggling to take a step of obedience with God this week.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK THREE

CHAPTER 3 WAITING ON A MIRACLE

Found on pages 61 - 73 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Continue to focus on making connections while diving deeper into the discussion. Here are some helpful tips as you prepare for your third meeting.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Follow up with everyone in your group again to thank them for coming.
- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Chapter 3 of *Miracles* in preparation for your next meeting.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- Continue praying for each person in your group to grow in their knowledge of God as they read through *Miracles*.
- Pray for people in your group who are waiting on God for a miracle to feel encouraged this week and to grow in their faith.

WHAT TO EXPECT

At this point, you should notice your group feeling more comfortable with each other and opening up more. Friendships should start forming, and you might find people hanging out for a while after your Small Group ends. This is a good thing! Capitalize on the deepening friendships this week when discussing the content. Don't be surprised if God starts to unearth some deeper issues in people's lives. Allow time for everyone to talk about what God has shown them. Remember this important phrase: "Leaders go first." If God has revealed something to you this week, share it with your group. Set the tone for your group; they will follow your lead.

Week 3 focuses on something we've all experienced: having to wait. Waiting on God for a miracle can be especially difficult. Sometimes the need is urgent, and we need God to move *now*. Other times, it can feel like we've waited forever for God to answer our prayers. The combined stories of Jesus healing a woman with an issue of blood and raising a dead man's daughter touch on both types of needs. Your Small Group will likely have people in both situations: those with urgent needs and those who have been waiting on God for a long time. Resist the impulse to "problem solve" in your group when people share their needs. Instead, give people space to talk, and listen to what they have to say. Pray for those who are waiting on God for a miracle, and encourage them not to give up.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 3 WAITING ON A MIRACLE

WARM-UP

What is something you hate waiting for?

INTRO

No one likes to wait...for anything. It's especially hard when we're waiting on a miracle. Whether the situation is urgent and we need a miracle right away, or we've been waiting years for God to move, waiting is always hard. Today, we will discuss two interconnected stories about people who waited on God for a miracle, Jairus and a woman with an issue of blood. Let's discuss both of these miracles and how they apply to us today.

PASSAGE

Read Luke 8:40-56 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 3 discussion questions found on pages 143-147.

- 1. Look at Luke 8:40-56. In what ways was Jairus's need different from the woman's need? How were their needs similar?
- 2. Have you ever needed an urgent miracle? What was it, and what happened?

- **3.** Have you ever waited on God for years to do a miracle? What was it, and what happened?
- 4. Read Luke 8:47-48. How did Jesus respond to the woman, and what did His response do for her?
- 5. Read Luke 8:49-50. What is Jesus trying to teach Jairus in this moment?
- 6. Why do you think we have to wait on God sometimes? What is God up to?
- 7. Think of a time you had to wait on God for something. What did God teach you during that season?

APPLICATION

Is there something you are currently waiting on God to do? Is it something urgent, or have you been waiting a long time? What is it?

How does God want you to respond while you wait?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application questions above.
- Pray for everyone in your Small Group to trust God more, even when waiting for a miracle.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK FOUR

CHAPTER 4 MIRACLES WITH FRIENDS

Found on pages 75 - 89 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

You're halfway done! Begin to focus on one-onone connections. Here are some helpful tips as you prepare for your fourth meeting.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Chapter 4 of *Miracles* in preparation for your next meeting.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- As you begin the last half of the *Miracles* study, pray that people would open up even more during your group, and that the friendships would grow deeper.
- Pray for anyone in your group who might be struggling with loneliness to find connection and support.

WHAT TO EXPECT

You're already halfway through the study! At this point, it's a good idea to start connecting with each person in your Small Group one-on-one. Meet for coffee, grab a bite, or hang out after church. As a Small Group Leader, you want to make a personal connection with everyone in the group and help them take their next step in their walk with God. As you do, the second half of the study will go even deeper. Remember, people will enjoy the discussion in your Small Group, but it's the connections that keep them coming back.

Week 4 touches on an all-too-common topic: loneliness. Our culture is experiencing a loneliness epidemic. You might find that some of the people in your group are struggling with feeling lonely. The story of Jesus healing the paralytic touches on this topic. The man had friends who cared about him enough to bring him to Jesus. If anyone in your Small Group is struggling with loneliness, what a great opportunity to reach out and help them feel connected!

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 4 MIRACLES WITH FRIENDS

WARM-UP

In what ways does culture perpetuate loneliness and isolation? Give some examples.

INTRO

Loneliness is at an all-time high. People are more digitally connected yet more isolated than ever before. But God created us to experience friendship at a deep and lasting level. Not only is this important for our physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being, but it can also open the door for a miracle. Today, let's talk about the story of a group of men who cared so much for their friend that they were willing to do whatever it took to bring him to Jesus.

PASSAGE

Read Luke 5:17-26 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 4 discussion questions found on pages 149-153.

- 1. Read Luke 5:17-19. What do we learn about friendship from these verses?
- 2. Do you have friends like the men in this story people who would do whatever it takes to help you out? Explain.

- **3.** How can we find and cultivate deep friendships like this in our lives?
- 4. Tell us about a time you felt lonely. How did you make it through that time?
- 5. Read Luke 5:20. Why did Jesus say, "Friend, your sins are forgiven," instead of healing him physically right away?
- 6. What do we learn about Jesus from this story?
- 7. Is there someone you know who is struggling with a need? What can you do this week to be a friend to this person?

APPLICATION

Are you currently struggling with loneliness? Explain.

What's something you can do this week to combat the loneliness you feel?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application questions above.
- Pray for everyone to go the extra mile this week in loving and reaching out to others.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK FIVE

CHAPTER 5 FINDING JESUS IN OUR DEEPEST PAIN

Found on pages 91 - 103 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

There are only two weeks left. It's time to start looking ahead. Here are some helpful tips as you prepare for your fifth meeting.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Chapter 5 of *Miracles* in preparation for your next meeting.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- Pray for your group's next steps after *Miracles* ends, and that everyone would be excited to continue meeting.
- Pray for anyone in your group who is going through a difficult season right now. Pray that God would bring them comfort and peace, and that they would grow in their relationship with Him.

WHAT TO EXPECT

With only two weeks left, it's time to start looking ahead. What will your Small Group do after *Miracles* ends? Begin talking to your group about your next steps:

1. Plan something fun to do together.

2. Pick your next study.

Coaching Tip: When you talk to your group about next steps, have an idea of what you want to do. Discuss it with your group, and they will follow your lead.

Speaking of next steps, as you pray for the people in your group, ask God, "What is each person's next step?" Maybe someone needs to get baptized. Maybe someone needs to start serving. Maybe someone should start co-leading the Small Group with you. The list is endless. Spend time thinking about the people in your group and praying for God to give them their next step. Remember, people grow as they take steps.

Week 5 covers the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead. While this is a powerful miracle, the story also highlights the pain we feel when it seems like God hasn't come through. This topic will likely resonate with anyone in your Small Group who is still waiting on God for a miracle. If someone is facing a situation that did not end the way they had hoped or prayed for, then this lesson might be incredibly emotional. Give people space to talk, and encourage everyone that God sees them, and He cares.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 5 FINDING JESUS IN OUR DEEPEST PAIN

WARM-UP

How likely are you to "catastrophize" situations?

INTRO

We all have the tendency to play out the "worst-case scenario" in our minds. But what happens when the worst case becomes a reality? How do we respond? Today, we will look at the lives of two biblical characters, Mary and Martha, and how they interacted with Jesus during a tragic loss.

PASSAGE

Read John 11:17-44 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 5 discussion questions found on pages 156-159.

- 1. Read John 11:21 and 32. Why do you think Mary and Martha both said the same words to Jesus when they saw Him?
- 2. Have you ever felt like Mary and Martha in this story—"God, if You had shown up, this tragedy wouldn't have happened"? Tell us about it.

- **3.** It's a natural human tendency to blame God when we experience pain and loss. Why is that?
- 4. Jesus waits long enough for Lazarus to die before He leaves Jerusalem. Why do you think Jesus waited?
- 5. Throughout the course of this book, we have seen multiple miracle stories where God waited before providing a miracle. What does this teach you about God?
- 6. Read John 11:33-35. Why does Jesus weep? What does this reveal about God?
- 7. How do you think Mary, Martha, and Lazarus saw Jesus differently as a result of this miracle?

APPLICATION

Are you facing a painful situation in life right now? What is it?

What do you think God is trying to teach you in the season you're in?

PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application questions above.
- Pray that we would run to God, not from Him, in our pain, and that God would meet us in our pain.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



WEEK SIX

CHAPTER 6 THE SECOND FIRE

Found on pages 105 - 119 in Miracles.

PREPARING FOR YOUR SMALL GROUP

Congratulations, it's the last week! Take time to reflect on the entire study and finalize your next steps.

WHAT TO COMMUNICATE

- Send out prayer requests to the group.
- If anyone missed the group, be sure to reach out and see if they need anything.
- Encourage everyone to read Chapter 6 of *Miracles* in preparation for your next meeting.
- Remind everyone about your group's next steps: 1. What's your plan to do something fun? 2. What's your next study? If you haven't finalized these plans, you can this week.

WHAT TO PRAY

- Pray for any prayer requests that were mentioned at your last meeting.
- The final week of *Miracles* is about God's restoration following failure. Pray for anyone in your Small Group who might be struggling with past or current failures. Ask God to speak to them and reveal His love for them.
- Pray for your group's next steps and that everyone would be excited.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Congratulations on finishing the study! Spend time celebrating with your group this week. Your final meeting should have a sense of excitement and fulfillment. Relationships have formed and grown. Spend time reflecting on the study. Ask everyone to share something God has done in them over the past 6 weeks. If you haven't finalized your next steps with the group, be sure to do that this week. **Plan something fun together, and pick your next study.**

You've been praying for each person in your group to take their next step in their relationship with God. Begin meeting with the people in your group one-on-one to help determine their next step, and encourage them to take it. This is the best thing you can do as a Small Group leader to help people grow.

Week 6 ends our study with God's redemption following failure. We've all experienced failure in life, but for some, the sense of failure is overwhelming. The story of Jesus restoring Peter is both powerful and touching. Give people space to discuss their personal experiences. As a leader, you can set the tone by sharing about a failure in your own life, and how God has used that to bring about good. This final lesson should be a powerful moment for your Small Group to connect and grow closer together. Your group will likely want to continue meeting, and that's great! Use the momentum to finalize your next steps together.

LEADING YOUR SMALL GROUP

CHAPTER 6 THE SECOND FIRE

WARM-UP

Tell us about a time you failed at something. What happened, and what was it like?

INTRO

We've all faced failure. But surely Peter's denial of Jesus ranks near the top of failures in life. What does Jesus do in response to Peter's failure? He restores him...through a miracle and a conversation. Today, let's look at Jesus' story of overflowing fish and learn about God's miracle of restoration.

PASSAGE

Read John 21:1-22 and Luke 5:1-11 together.

DISCUSSION

Direct your Small Group to the Week 6 discussion questions found on pages 161-165.

- 1. Going through this study, what have you learned about the primary reason God performs miracles?
- 2. Read John 21:1-3. Why did Peter go back to fishing?

- **3.** Have you ever felt like you failed God before? How did you respond to the failure?
- 4. Read John 21:4-6. Why does Jesus perform the same miracle here as when He first called Peter? (See Luke 5:1-11 for the original miracle.)
- 5. Read John 21:15-17. Jesus asks Peter three times, "Do you love Me?" What does this reveal about God when we fail?
- 6. What is Jesus ultimately up to in this miracle story?
- 7. Have you experienced a time when God restored you? Tell us about it.

APPLICATION

Are you struggling in your relationship with God for any reason? If so, how can we pray for you?

What do you feel like God would say to you right now?

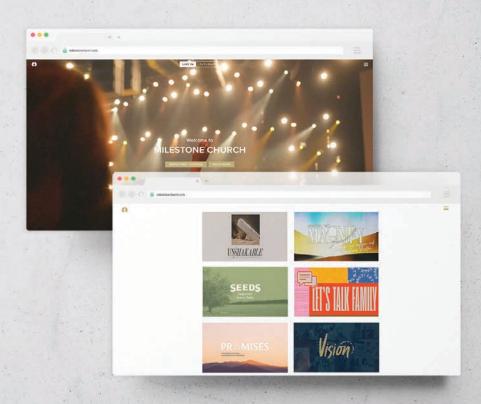
PRAYER

- Pray for anyone who responded to the application questions above.
- Pray that everyone in your Small Group would receive God's restoration and know how much God loves them.
- Take prayer requests and pray for the needs of the group.



ALSO FROM JEFF LITTLE

VISIT US ONLINE!



MILESTONECHURCH.COM

CONNECT WITH JEFF LITTLE

- O @JEFFLITTLE
 -) @JEFF_LITTLE
- **f** @PASTORJEFFLITTLE