

Word-Share-Prayer Matthew 14:13-21 Yellowstone Presbytery, March 13, 2026

Feeding the Five Thousand – Quite an Adventure, *together*, with Christ

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." 17 They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And all ate and were filled, and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Alone, read & reflect silently on the passage & then on the questions below. In your small group, after introducing yourselves, share about the Word together, guided by the questions below. Before time expires, EACH person briefly share 1 purely personal prayer request. Pray for each other before the large group reconvene to share what you heard the Spirit saying.

1. What was the Spirit lifting up for you?

2. How am I following, pursuing Jesus even when it's not convenient, comfortable...?

3. What seems like a mere 5 loaves & 2 fish? Where do I lack, am I worried about scarcity?

Where is our congregation lacking, worried about scarcity? Our presbytery?

4. What does Jesus do, say to, ask his disciples in sequence? Circle the verbs/phrases. What do you observe?

5. What leads to Jesus' abundant provision?

6. Reflecting on Jesus taking their fear, scarcity -> abundant feeding of 15 -20,000 total, what are the disciples' to do, vs. 19? How does Jesus choose to work?

7. What may Jesus be inviting me to give him, receive, where join him in his work, mission?

What about our church?

Why & How to Use *Word-Share-Prayer Practice*

"Be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God."

Word-Share-Prayer (Read-Reflect-Respond-Request) is for use with small groups, committees, ministry teams, and boards. The texts are deliberately a bit short so that groups, Ministry teams, and committees with limited time can still ***"be the people of God before doing the work of the people of God."*** For small group meetings, a longer section of text may be used or just more time spent discussing each segment.

For many briefer ministry team/committee meetings, we follow a 7-7-7 format - 7 minutes for individual Bible Study, 7 minutes to share one insight per person and 7 minutes to pray for one another. If we use these sheets for a regular one, one and one-half hour Bible study, then the biblical passage could be a bit longer and our schedule would be the ***Word***-30 minutes, ***Share (sharing)*** of lives (blessings and prayer requests)-45 minutes and ***Prayer***-15 minutes might be a breakdown.

For a brief ministry team/committee allow a minimum of 7-7-7 minutes (plus or minus) format.

1. Give every person 5-7 minutes to read and meditate on passage, then questions in *silence* (we don't have people do them as "homework" since many will fail to do so).
2. Spend another at least 7 minutes or so asking people to briefly share one scriptural insight. If the group is larger than 8-10, break into groups of 2-3, *max* 4, to ensure *each* person can speak/contribute, be listened to, prayed for. Saves time. Most come to any group/meeting with pain, needs. Many will *never* speak, especially a personal request, in a large group, unless provided this opportunity with a tiny group.
3. Ask for one-sentence *personal* prayer requests. Ensure each person is heard. Spend more time on this if someone in the group is in real distress about something. Otherwise, just a sentence or so per person as we want to lift one another up specifically but haven't the time for more sharing... unless we are willing and time allows. After doing this a few times, most teams experience and understand it's transformative power. They are often willing to spend more time in this Bible study & prayer portion of the meeting simply because we discover work to be more focused on core priorities, more efficient and more in keeping with the mind of Christ (Phil 2, Rom. 12:1,2) more Christ-like in the rest of the meeting, with genuine community.

Pray for one another out loud by name, giving everyone the complete freedom to pray in silence if they prefer.

Hope this is useful for you... praying for you and your congregation to experience the transforming presence of our Lord in new ways as so many of us have.

With joy – Stan

Link to free copies of sample Word-Share-Prayer resources for your session, committee, group, team on a variety of scriptures

<http://www.vitalchurchesinstitute.com/pages/word-share-prayer>

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