

session 4 study guide

the power of being there

starter

BEING THERE: Name the five most influential people in your life and tell how they have influenced you. What did each person do that really had an impact on your life?

Name	Reason he or she impacted me
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____

message

Being there for someone. It can be more powerful than words, the “right” answer, money or gifts. Being there transmits the ultimate message that we care about others.

Of course, being there for others isn’t always easy. We are easily distracted or concerned with our own needs. But we have a good role model—God provides the ultimate example. Deuteronomy 31:8 states, “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

The New Testament is full of other examples that illustrate how we can be there for others. Throughout the Gospels, we see how Jesus was there for the outcasts of society and those who

needed His help. He was there for His disciples, and after He left the earth, His disciples and the apostles were there for the churches they visited. In Luke 10:38-42, we read a story that demonstrates the value of *just being together*. As you read this passage, consider the following questions: (1) Were Martha's actions in this situation wrong? (2) Is this passage more about Jesus commending Mary or criticizing Martha?

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"

"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

dig

1. What was Martha distracted by?

2. Would you consider the things that Martha was doing to be bad? Why or why not?

3. What things—good or bad—distract you from spending time with your family?

4. What might have been going through Martha's mind when she asked Jesus to tell her sister to help her?

5. What benefits did Mary receive from being with Jesus?

6. Spending time together can bless both people involved. Read through the following examples in the Bible about the value of communing together. What benefit does each passage state is gained for those who take the time to fellowship together?

Hebrews 10:24-25

Acts 2:42-47

Romans 1:11-12

Luke 19:1-10

7. What benefits might come from hanging out with your family more?

apply

When my (Jim's) mom died several years ago, it was hard on our family. Cancer racked my mom's body, and we spent most of a year watching her die.

We had moved Mom home from the hospital, and we were trying to make her as comfortable as possible. We moved a hospital bed into Mom and Dad's bedroom. I would often find myself sitting on their bed while she lay in her hospital bed.

One day she was dozing and very weak, when all of a sudden she perked up and asked me, "Jimmy, where is your dad?"

"He's watching a ball game on TV. Do you need him, Mom?"

"No, not really," she replied. Then she looked up at me and said, "You know, Jimmy, I never really liked baseball."

"You never liked baseball, Mom?" I was puzzled. "Did you ever miss a little league game of mine?"

"No."

"Did you ever miss any of my Pony league, junior high or high school games, Mom?"

Again she replied, "I don't think so."

"Mom," I continued, "you never missed a game, and on top of that you never missed any of my three brothers' games either. Dad and you watch ball games all day long on TV. What do you mean you never liked baseball?"

“Jimmy, I didn’t go to the games to watch baseball. I went to the games to be with you!”

I realized at that moment why this incredible woman had had such a powerful impact on my life: because of the power of being there even when she didn’t care for the activity. Her very presence in my life was cause for great inspiration and influence.

1. Who has always been there for you in your life? How has your life been affected because of this person?

2. What is the best part of knowing that someone will be there for you?

3. Can you think of an illustration from the Bible where Christ had a power-of-being-there influence on someone?

4. Is it important that family be there for each other? Why or why not?

5. Being there for someone will look different for each individual. For one person, it might mean sitting down and talking face to face. For another, it might mean shooting hoops with a friend and allowing some time for conversation. For someone else, it might just mean a phone call with a friend or family member to check in and say hello. Think about the members of your family. What is one way that you can be there for each member of your family?

Family member

Way I can be there for him or her

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6. Unfortunately, sometimes families aren't there for each other. A parent can walk out or a sibling can skip town. Families are made up of imperfect humans who make mistakes. But God *is* perfect. If someone in your family has let you down, you can rest assured in the promises of the family of God. Read each verse and summarize what promises God's family offers us.

Deuteronomy 31:6 _____

Isaiah 9:6 _____

Psalm 10:14 _____

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 _____

Galatians 4:6-7 _____

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 _____

1 John 3:1-3 _____

reflect

1. In what ways is “being present” a gift to those you love?

2. Is it easy or hard for you to be there for your family? Why?

3. Are there issues that prevent you from “being there” for other family members? If so, what are those issues?

4. Should you be there for a family member who isn’t there for you? Why or why not?

5. Do you know a family that demonstrates being there for one another? Describe what this family does to be there for each other.

6. Jesus often blessed people by touching them or laying hands on them. Why do you think touch is such a powerful way to bless others?

7. How have you experienced the presence of God in your family's life?

meditation



And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

MATTHEW 28:20