

## Meeting Four: Participants' Agenda

### OPENING PRAYER

#### Gathering Prayer

*Pause for a brief moment of quieting and then pray an adaptation of the first verses of A Prayer of Spiritual Longing.*

**All**        **Loving God and Father, we long for you.  
We long for deeper meaning in our lives,  
for a wider love than we now experience.  
We yearn to know we belong and  
are connected to you and all creation.**

*Leader*    As we prepare to invite parishioners  
to the ministry of leading small Christian communities  
for the *Longing for the Holy* process,  
help us to discern well  
as we surface names of persons who hold the qualities  
that are necessary for facilitating small groups.

**All**        **Help us to form those who accept the invitation to lead  
so they can confidently encourage others  
to discover how to live more consciously and joyfully  
in your presence,  
and to channel the longing at the core of their being  
with deep, expanding hope.  
This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.**

### FAITH SHARING

**Spirituality in a Christian Context:  
A Heart for God and for Each Other**

Lifting Our Hearts ...

... in Song

*Play Track 4 of the CD:*

*"E Haku i Ka Pu'u Wai (Weave One Heart)."*

... in the Quiet

*Pause for a moment of silence and enter more deeply into the  
presence of God.*

... in the Word

*Read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.*

*Take a few minutes to ponder a word, a phrase, a question, or a feeling that rises up  
in you. Reflect on this quietly; then share it aloud.*

*(Even if no one wishes to reflect aloud, permit sufficient time for silent reflection.)*

## **Encountering Wisdom for Life**

The Christian story is a love story of God's overwhelming goodness. At its center is Jesus, the Christ, who shows us the way God loves and invites us to do the same. We are asked to "pray in secret" to cultivate a loving relationship with our good God in prayer and through the moral ordering of our lives. We are also asked to help bring about a just world in which all are able to share equitably.

**Mellowness of Heart.** The Christian life is not all prayer and sacrifice. We must let our lives be filled with those things that allow us to delight in the goodness of being alive. Gratitude is as essential to a holy life as are believing and doing the right things. If we are consumed by anger and bitterness, if we are wired, anxious, and workaholic, we may be too closed in on ourselves to be grateful and delight in the goodness God offers us.

When we trust enough in the God of love, we are more able to extend that love to all.

Mellowness also implies that we are flexible and forgiving, willing to let love be the compass that directs our relationships and our lives. Such a heart is a heart that has allowed God's love to enter it and change its behavior.

**Community.** The Gospel clearly teaches that God calls us, not just as individuals, but as a community and that how we relate to each other is just as essential as how we relate to God. In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus is shown summarizing the whole of the law, by declaring that the two great commandments, to love God and love one's neighbor, can never be separated. We can really love God who is love only if we are concretely engaged with a living faith community. We do not fruitfully worship alone.

We are taught, nurtured, challenged, and supported in the spiritual life by all the levels of our faith community. The gathered worshipping Church, devout reception of the sacraments, the variety of small faith-sharing groups, individual relationships of spiritual care: all these are essential parts of our Christian journeys.

## **Sharing Our Faith**

How can the role of small community leader help us build up the communal aspect of our Church?

© 2009 RENEW International. All rights reserved.  
Copies may be made of this page by those who have purchased  
*Longing for the Holy: Planning Your Spiritual Journey Together*

## **PREPARING TO SELECT LEADERS OF SMALL COMMUNITIES**

### **BREAK**

## **STRATEGIES FOR INVITATION AND FORMATION OF SMALL COMMUNITY LEADERS**

### **NEXT STEPS**

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

#### **Prayers of Petition**

*Response* Lord, hear our prayer.

#### **Concluding Prayer**

*Close with the following (final three verses of A Prayer of Spiritual Longing):*

*Leader* Let us pray.

*All* May we embody the Christ life  
in this our moment and place in history.  
May the communion of saints surround us  
and companion us on our journey.  
May your Holy Spirit empower us to be holy  
for the good of the world  
and for your honor and glory.  
We ask this through the risen Christ,  
our brother and friend. Amen.