**CULTIVATING JESUS ENCOUNTERS**

1st Assembly of Gainesville, Adapted by Jeremy Stephens

**Making Space**

* Trust God will honor His Word. There is an enormous amount of Scriptural support. We see Jesus modeling it and the Church living it. Let’s lead our people in faith.
* Create an Environment of **Safety** and **Expectancy**. Let people know they’re not going to blow it. It may be awkward at first but we are all learning from each other and doing it together. Most of all God really is with us, for us, and going to use us.
* Break down the barriers of **comparison**, **performance**, and **insecurity**. These are often feelings that come up when we begin to step out and experience the spiritual gifts.
* Know it’s not your performance. Everyone has something to contribute to the meeting (priesthood of all believers). It’s not a one person show. God is the One on display and He is building His Church through the gifts.

**Making the Call**

Focus the group’s attention on a truth about God. Make it real, something you have been wrestling with or are deeply connected to. Call the group to remember this truth and to allow God to guide us to an encounter through this truth.

**In the Encounter**

We often miss out on what God has for us because we seldom take the time to listen. Often this time of waiting is a spiritual discipline for both the group and individually. During the moments where a leader needs to give direction make sure the talking is minimal and only focuses on precisely what needs to be shared to help the group encounter Jesus. this is not the moment to preach a sermonette.

* Wait for God to speak. Silence may be difficult but it is worth the struggle.
* Pray to invite Jesus to fill everyone with the Holy Spirit. Invite the group to open their hearts and ask Jesus to fill them.
* Ask who would like to be prayed for to be filled with the Holy Spirit and have the group surround them in prayer in an appropriate way.
* Encourage people to be sensitive to what God is speaking: scriptures, images, feelings, words and to respond to what God is speaking in prayer.
* Occasionally ask if people have anything from the Lord and continue to encourage them to be free from feeling they will ‘make a mistake’

**The Response**

* Invite people to share what they feel God may be giving them or if they feel they have a word from God for the group. It could be a Scripture, a mental image or picture, an exhortation to the group or individual, etc.
	+ People have probably given and received prophecies without even knowing it when the Biblical function of a prophecy is, “…for building up, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor.14:3).
* After there are Jesus encounters with the Holy Spirit encourage your people that they can exercise them at any time. They can pray for the sick at school, receive a word of wisdom for someone at work, and have a word of knowledge about someone on the street.