



Walking In



Covenant Community

A guide for I-61 support groups

Roger H. Ford, 2010, 2014



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Isaiah 61 Ministries

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Walking In Covenant Community

...I want to remind you that the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe.

Jude 5

Introduction

It is a sobering fact that even after the Lord Himself brings deliverance many people later are destroyed due to unbelief. A common factor in persons falling away after deliverance is isolation from an authentic

Christian community where people share their lives (and struggles) honestly and support each other as unto the Lord. Some may belong to Bible-believing churches and even attend small groups. Often, however, their Christian friends are ignorant about spiritual warfare and unable to help them grow in freedom, healing and Christian maturity.

This booklet was prepared to help people who have received ministry through Isaiah 61 walk together in covenant relationship. Genuine Christian growth requires that we share our lives with others in honesty and transparency. This is not easy, but the benefits far outweigh the effort required and risk involved.

... let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...

Hebrews 10:24-25

Roger H. Ford, Isaiah 61 Ministries

What is a Covenant Community?

I-61 Covenant Communities are small groups of about 5-12 people who have experienced deliverance and desire to grow deeper. Based on the Greek word *Koinonia*, which means intimate fellowship, Covenant Community members meet regularly for accountability, spiritual growth and spiritual protection.

Paul taught that the Kingdom of God was not about talk, but about power. This power comes from the Holy Spirit and is the power of Jesus to cleanse us, deliver us, heal us, and re-create us into people useful to serve Him. Salvation and deliverance prayers are the beginning of our spiritual journey. We can experience more of His Kingdom by committing to walk with others in Koinonia.

Walking in covenant community is not easy, as one of the leaders of a SE Asian I-61 group discovered. She said, "When we first began to meet it was a challenge, but we remembered the promise from Isaiah 61:1

and decided to take that scripture literally. We learned to share our burdens, confess our sins and test for spirits together so that we can walk out the freedom that we proclaim. As we began to learn to walk in covenant community we began receiving more freedom. Friends started noticing and asking what it was that made us different.” This group is now leading others to Jesus, deliverance, healing and Kingdom living.

Read Isaiah 63:7-8, I Corinthians 2:4, 4:20, Acts 2:43-47 and 18:24-26

How Do Covenant Communities Work?

Isaiah 61 encourages our small groups to function as closely as possible to the house church model that existed in the 1st Century. The members in each group meet regularly face-to-face, sometimes keeping in more frequent contact using mobile phones, Skype, email, and instant chat. (We like to say that I-61 covenant community is a 21st Century version of the 1st Century church!) Technology also allows our groups to keep

in contact with sister groups in other locations for sharing praise reports, prayer requests, regular updates, etc.

When these groups meet everyone is encouraged to share. I-61 covenant communities have no passive observers. One of the benefits of meeting in small groups is that people will have the opportunity to use their spiritual gifts and develop new ones, as God intended. (In a large church setting often good singers are excluded from leading worship due to the availability of highly-trained musicians. Likewise, aspiring speakers, prayer leaders, mercy-givers, etc. may never be given a chance to develop their gifts in the big church setting.)

A typical gathering should include prayer, singing and announcements, introduction of newcomers (if any), testimonies and sharing from the Word. Some application should also be included, such as revisiting our deliverances “one gate” at a time, inner healing, then, accountability questions, prayer requests and testing of spirits.

A distinction of I-61 covenant groups compared to most other church groups is our understanding of Jesus' command to exercise His power and authority to preach with power, demonstrated by driving out of evil spirits and praying for healing, expecting that it will happen! The Bible teaches that we are to test the spirits. This is a cornerstone principle of how Isaiah 61 ministries carries out its mission and teaches others through on-the-job training.

***Read 1 Corinthians 12:1, 7, 14, 18, 27,
14:26 and 1 John 4:1***

Importance of Accountability Questions

Breaking free from our sinful habits and iniquities (sin tendencies, often inherited from our ancestors) is not easy. Confession and repentance, followed by deliverance is a good beginning. But old habits often die hard. Christians need counsel, loving encouragement, and occasionally strong rebuke in order to be set free and "sin no more," as Jesus commands.

An important part of I-61 covenant community groups is to hold one another accountable and pray for each other when we are tempted, or, have fallen back into sin. Accountability requires regular direct confrontation with specific questions by someone we trust. A vague, “How are you doing?” question will usually bring an equally vague (and sometimes untrue) response such as, “I am fine, how are you?” This is *NOT* Christian accountability!

Covenant Community members ask and answer each other questions such as these:

- How much time have you spent praying and reading the Word this week?
- What did you learn from the Lord this week?
- Have you controlled your tongue and thought life since we last met?
- Have you committed any sexual sin?
- Are you regularly testifying and contributing financially to the Kingdom of God?
- Are you telling me the truth right now?
- How may we pray for you?

***Read Ephesians 5:8, 2 Corinthians 7:1,
10:4-6 and 1 Peter 2:9***

Praying and Testing of Spirits

The accountability questions begin a regular time of praying for each other, which sometimes includes the testing of spirits. Covenant Community members learn how to test for evil spirits through observation and on-the-job training (OJT). The Covenant Community leaders will invite members to practice self-deliverance as well as assist in the testing of spirits for other community members until everyone is able to minister as Jesus did and as He taught His followers (that is, by OJT.)

One by one the leader (or someone assigned) will invite members who wish to testify or share any struggles they are experiencing. For deep healing to occur most of us need to deal with more layers of sin, iniquities, traumas, ungodly beliefs, curses and other wounds than could be dealt with during our initial time of deliverance prayer. A season of solitary walking out and self-deliverance is helpful; however, even more spiritual growth is possible when we take the bold step to

share our lives in covenant community. Deeper healing takes place gradually, as you bring to the cross any areas of hidden struggles and wounds. Jesus can heal everything that we bring into His light, and your I-61 family will help you as you walk together in openness and trust.

Following the I-61 ministry process, the person may be led to confess, repent, break any curses or ungodly beliefs, and renounce possible agreements with evil spirits. The leader will then minister prayer or perhaps inner healing, share Bible truth, and test for (expel) any evil spirits that may be present.¹

Sensitivity must be used when selecting the venue for ministering in some cases. For example, deliverance ministry is usually not appropriate when visitors are present. Also, caution should be used to consider gender issues and ministering with new believers in the group who might lack the maturity to

¹ For more explanation about Isaiah 61 Ministries' approach to prayer please see our booklets **Preparing for Your Deliverance** and **Walking Out Your Deliverance**.

participate in some sessions. Jesus, through His Holy Spirit will guide you.

Read John 20:23, Luke 9:1-2, Mark 6:7, 16:15-20 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Fellowship, Food and Finances

In the first century the followers of Jesus met in homes for their worship services. In addition to worship, studying the Scriptures and prayer, they also shared their lives fully with one another. As Jesus said, His followers were a family. They enjoyed meals together, took communion, reached out to share Christ with unbelievers, and gave financially to those in need. I-61 covenant communities are encouraged to do the same.

Some groups eat together every week, others less often. Some have fellowship outings to invite newcomers; others have occasional “bring a friend” nights to the regular meeting. Communion can be as often as the communities feel led, and an

offering box should be always be available for sharing of finances.

***Read Matthew 12:46-50, Luke 8:21,
Acts 2:42, 4:34 and 2 Corinthians 8:10-12***

Meet Regularly (and End on Time!)

Finally, there is no set rule for how frequently or how long a covenant community group should meet. A lot will depend on the culture of the host country, travel distances, work schedules, etc. We recommend that groups meet weekly for regular gatherings, and possibly more for social activities, gender-specific accountability, outreach, etc. Email and text messages can also be great encouragement between meetings.

Members should agree to the schedule and set a time limit so that everyone can plan accordingly and people do not become stressed or worn out from over booking or meetings that last too long. Let commitment to love God and each other,

combined with mutual respect and grace, be your rule. The Holy Spirit will lead you and guide you as you commit to follow and serve Jesus in covenant community.

***Read Psalm 133:1, John 16:12-15,
Hebrews 3:13, 12:14 and 13:16***

Suggestions for Getting Started

While we know that Jesus (through His Holy Spirit) will lead you, the following ideas may help you get your group started. You might begin your first few weeks by Discussing ***Walking Out Your Deliverance*** together. Next you could review ***Preparing for Your Deliverance***, allowing each member to share something from each of his/her 12 gate sections. This may open the way for more prayer for deeper deliverance and healing.

Then you might do a Bible study on Jesus' deliverance and healing ministry. Later you could select a book from the I-61 Reading List to study together, and so on. As you go,

keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, remember to let the Holy Spirit lead, and keep practicing praying and commanding according to Jesus' example (OJT).

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The One who calls you is faithful and He will do it.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

For Further Reading

Hammond, Hammond, Frank. **Demons & Deliverance in the Ministry of Jesus.** (Impact Christian Books, Kirkwood, MO). 1991.

Sandford, John Loren and Mark Sandford. **Deliverance and Inner Healing.** (Chosen Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan). 2008

Neighbour, Ralph W., Jr. **Where Do We Go From Here? A Guidebook for the Cell Group Church.** (Touch Publications, Houston, Texas). 2000.

See www.I-61Ministries.org for the full list

A Commitment to Covenant Community

We, the undersigned, commit to walk in covenant community with Isaiah 61 Ministries, to meet regularly and share our lives together in honesty and transparency with the covenant community meeting in (place) _____. We pledge to help and respect each other, honor our relationships as a sacred trust, and promise to treat things shared by our group as confidential. In the Name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, Savior, and Master, we sign below. Date:_____

(All who agree are invited to sign.)

About Isaiah 61 Ministries

Mission Statement

It is the mission of Isaiah 61 Ministries (I-61) to continue the ministry of Jesus, who, as prophesied in Isaiah 61:1-4, and fulfilled in Luke 4:17-19, came to release his followers from the bondage of satanic oppression.

Specific Goals and Objectives

- *To offer intercessory prayer ministry (spiritual warfare, healing, and deliverance) to Christians who acknowledge their need to break free from generational curses, personal sin patterns, unhealed traumas, and other forms or root causes of demonic oppression.*

- *To provide support mechanisms to help people maintain their freedom in Christ and grow in Kingdom living after they have received ministry.*
- *To develop and offer training workshops for individuals, churches, and other Christian ministries in the area of spiritual warfare and Kingdom Living.*
- *To disciple and mentor others who desire and feel called by God to learn about and engage in intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare ministry.*
- *To conduct research and disseminate knowledge in the field of spiritual warfare through books, articles, monographs, and teaching curriculum.*

***Study to show thyself approved unto God,
a workman that need not be ashamed,
rightly dividing the Word of Truth.***

2 Timothy 2:15

An Invitation to Respond

Jesus did not charge a fee for ministry, but He did ask people who had been touched by His ministry to offer the gift to the priest as Moses commanded. (See Matt. 8:4 & Luke 5:14)

I-61 depends on free-will gifts to cover our costs and offer our ministry to others. We invite you to contribute if you are so led.

If you would like to support Isaiah 61 Ministries please cut and remove (or photocopy) the form on the back of this page and mail to:

**Isaiah 61 Ministries
P. O. Box 628
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22803**

Or contact us through our website:
www.I-61Ministries.org

THANK YOU!

Response Form

Yes, I want to support I-61 Ministries to help people live in spiritual freedom!

- I am enclosing my gift of: \$_____.
- I am pledging \$_____ to be paid in _____ installments, beginning on _____.
- I am praying for I-61 Ministries.
- I would like to learn more about I-61 and the deliverance ministry. Please have someone contact me.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: (h) _____ (c) _____

Email: _____

- Please add me to (or update) your mailing list.
- Please remove me from your mailing list.

Following the scripture from Matthew 10:8b, “...freely you have received, freely give,” I-61 does not charge for ministry. We depend upon free will offerings from individuals and organizations that wish to support our work. Your tax-deductible contributions are deeply appreciated.

Printed copies are available for \$6.00.
Please contact us to purchase or for more
information:

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