

# GROUP GUIDE

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THRIVING IN  
CONNECTION WITH GOD,  
YOURSELF & OTHERS

rooted  
(IN)



# Your rooted (IN) Group Guide

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Thanks for joining this rooted journey!

Your journey is best taken with a group of friends, large or small. A community of people who will encourage you in your becoming and partner in creating safe, healing space for connection with God and with one another. Your roots will go deeper and wider together.

**For the Leader** This guide provides you with a flexible eight-week outline for your group. Feel free to adapt, expand, contract to suit the needs of your community. If possible, I recommend meeting weekly to build relationship and encourage depth.

As the leader, you set the tone for the group. If you lead with honesty and vulnerability, group members will follow. Set the values for your community right up front to ensure you create safe space for all to share.

**Noise-free.** Rooted communities are full of listening people. People who value listening to God and listening to one another. Who make silence safe and cultivate contemplative spaces for prayerful connection.

**Shame-free.** Rooted communities are full of safe people. People who encourage, cheer, and challenge. Who do not judge. Who accept you, see the best, offer grace, and call you in love into your true self.

**Formula-free.** Rooted communities are full of people who embrace process. People who do not offer easy answers or steps to growth and freedom. Who are on a lifelong journey of healing and becoming as they live by Spirit and follow Jesus together.

Commit as a group to creating a noise-free, shame-free, formula-free space for one another.

**For the Group** The following steps will help group members prepare for each week, and help ensure meaningful discussion and sharing. Note, Week One begins with Chapter One, so this reading should be completed before the first meeting.

- Read the chapters assigned for each week and complete the Deeper (IN) activities.
- Come prepared to share what you learned or experienced through the Deeper (IN) activities. The more honestly and authentically you share, the deeper your group will go together.
- Use these questions as guides as you read each chapter and consider what you might share with the group:
  - What ideas or concepts did you find most helpful?
  - What questions came to mind as you read?
  - What stories from your own life came to mind as you read?
  - How do the concepts from this chapter apply to your life today?

**For the Sessions** Each 90-minute session includes the following:

- An opening prayer and a few moments of centering silence
- A few readings from the book with questions for discussion
- A spiritual practice to share and process as a group

These groups are more about personal sharing and exploration, and less about traditional Bible or book study. Allow space for people to share their thoughts and stories. And be careful in each session to allow plenty of time (I suggest at least 30 minutes) to experience and process the spiritual practice together.

Some of the spiritual exercises are available through the rooted (IN).ten.tionally podcast. Episodes are noted as available in case you prefer to use them as part of your session. You'll find them at [www.susancarson.net/podcast](http://www.susancarson.net/podcast) or on the Susan Carson YouTube channel.

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# Week One: Chapter One, Deeper (IN)

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Share** the reason and guidelines for the group. If this is a new group, allow some time for each person to introduce themselves.

**Read** pages 26-29, beginning with heading “Rooted Connection that Heals.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How are you experiencing meaningful connection in your life?
- Would you describe your experience with God right now as more connected or disconnected? Why?

**Read** pages 29-30, beginning with heading “Removing to Restore.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- Where have you put down good roots in your life?

## **Spiritual practice: Lectio divina**

You’ll find the exercise on page 64. This exercise is also available as Episode One of the rooted (IN).ten.tionally podcast.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Two: Chapter Two, Remaining (IN)

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Review** the guidelines for the group.

**Read** John 15 and discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in these verses stand out?
- What does it mean to abide? What does an abiding life look like?

**Read** pages 41-44, beginning with heading “Knowing in Union.”

Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- What are the implications of being (IN) Christ? And Christ being (IN) us?
- Consider your soul soil and root system. How healthy does it look/feel today?

## **Spiritual practice: St. Patrick’s Prayer**

You’ll find the exercise on page 46. This exercise is also available as Episode Four of the rooted (IN).ten.tionally podcast.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Three: Chapters 3 and 4, (IN) Quietness and Trust

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 60–63, beginning with the heading “Hearing God.”

Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- What’s your experience of hearing God?

**Read** pages 69–71, beginning with the heading “Our Image of God.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- “How you see God is how you see everything.” How do you respond to this idea?
- How have authority figures helped color your view of God, for the good and bad?

## **Spiritual practice: Imaginative Prayer, Luke 15**

You’ll find the exercise on page 78. This exercise is also available as Episode Two of the rooted (IN).ten.tionally podcast.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Four: Chapters 5 and 6, (IN) Rest and Sacrament

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 86–87, “In the Quiet”, and 89–90, “Practicing the Presence.” Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How have you experienced God's presence in rest?
- Listen to your body for a moment. Listen to your heart. Do you sense an invitation to rest?

**Read** pages 104–105, beginning with heading “A Sacramental Life.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How have you experienced presence in sacrament?
- What is sacramental to you? What part of your ordinary day could become a sacramental practice for you?

## **Spiritual practice: Litany for Rest and Balance**

Pray this prayer crafted by Fran Pratt slowly over the group; then leave a few moments of silence for personal reflection and response. Source:

<http://www.franpratt.com/litanies/2016/5/13/litany-for-rest-and-balance>

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?



# Week Five: Chapters 7 and 8, (IN) Spirit and Grace

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 110-112, beginning with the heading “The Ultimate (IN).” Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How would you describe your relationship with Holy Spirit?

**Read** pages 125-126, beginning with heading “Grace Is Gift.”

Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- What message does shame speak into your life?
- What message does grace speak?

**Read** pages 129-131, beginning with heading “Necessary Weakness.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- Where are you feeling weakness? How is God inviting you to filling in Spirit and grace today?

## **Spiritual practice: Prayer of Examen**

You’ll find the exercise on page 135.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Six: Chapters 9 and 10, (IN) Truth and Light

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 146–148, beginning with the heading “What’s True?”  
Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- What words would you use to describe your true self?
- What words would you use to describe your false self?

**Read** pages 160–162, beginning with heading “Let There Be Light.”  
Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?

**Read** pages 162–164, beginning with heading “Listening for Light.”  
Take 20 to 30 minutes to begin working on **life maps**. Encourage members to continue this work in the coming week and let them know you’ll refer to their life maps next time you meet.

## **Spiritual practice: Listening Prayer**

You’ll find the exercise on page 155. This exercise is also available as Episode Three of the rooted (IN).ten.tionally podcast.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Seven: Chapters 11 and 12, (IN) Darkness and Sight

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 177-178, beginning with the heading “It Takes Two Hands” Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How have you encountered God in the darker seasons of your life?

**Read** pages 187-189, beginning with heading “Seeing Is Believing.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- Think for a moment about your life map. How has God met you in the painful places of your story with healing?
- How has God helped you re-see your story?

## **Spiritual practice: Rooted Prayer Experience**

You’ll find the exercise on page 194.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

# Week Eight: Chapters 13 and 14, (IN) Body and Flow

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**Begin** with a short opening prayer and allow a few moments of centering silence.

**Read** pages 201-202, beginning with the heading “Belonging.” Discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- How have you experienced a sense of belonging in your life?
- What might be in the way of a greater sense of belonging for you?

**Read** pages 211-213, beginning with heading “Flow.” Take a few minutes to discuss these questions as a group:

- What thoughts or ideas in this section stand out?
- Where are you noticing flow and fruitfulness in your life?
- What invitation do you sense to greater fruitful flow?

## **Spiritual practice: Living Undivided**

You’ll find the exercise on page 208.

If time allows, ask people to share what was meaningful from their experience. Was anything highlighted? Did they sense an invitation?

**End** by reading pages 217-218 to the group.