

A SUGGESTED SAMSON SOCIETY MEETING FORMAT

Host: My name is _____. Let's open this meeting with prayer, followed by a reading of the 23rd Psalm. [Asks someone to pray, another to read the **23rd Psalm.**]

Host: Welcome to this meeting of the Samson Society. We are a **company of Christian men.**

We are also:

Natural *loners* — who have recognized the dangers of isolation and are determined to escape them,

Natural *wanderers* — who are finding spiritual peace and prosperity at home,

Natural *liars* — who are now finding freedom in the truth,

Natural *judges* — who are learning how to judge ourselves aright,

Natural *strongmen* — who are experiencing God's strength as we admit our weaknesses.

As Christians, we meet at other times for worship, for teaching, or for corporate prayer. Today, however, we meet to talk. **Our purpose is to assist one another in our common journey.** We do so by sharing honestly, out of our own personal experience, the challenges and encouragements of daily Christian living in a fallen world.

Our faith rests in the love of God, as it is revealed in His Word and in the life of His Son. This is the **Great Fact** of the Gospel, which is the foundation of our Charter [Asks someone to read *The Fact.*]

Host: Let's take a moment to **introduce ourselves.** I'll begin and we'll go around the room. Those who wish may give a one-sentence statement of their reason for attending this meeting.

Host: We in the Samson Society have been set upon a **Path**, a way of living that leads to godliness and freedom. Here is the description of that Path that is given in our Charter. [Asks someone to read *The Path.*]

Host: We have now reached the **sharing portion of our meeting.** In sharing, we speak honestly out of our own experience. We tell the truth about ourselves, knowing that our brothers will listen to us in love and will hold whatever we say in strictest confidence. We try to keep our comments brief, taking care to leave plenty of time for others. We address our statements to the group as a whole rather than directing them toward any one person. As a rule, we refrain from giving advice to others or instructing them during the meeting, believing that such conversations are best reserved for private moments between friends.

The suggested topic today is _____ (*choose one of the Suggested Topics for Sharing*) — **but we are not confined to that subject.** You may speak about any issue that is currently commanding your attention. (*If the group is large, divide into smaller breakout groups for sharing.*) The floor is now open for anyone who wishes to speak.

Five minutes before the scheduled end of the meeting, the Host asks whether there are any final thoughts. When all who wish to speak have spoken, the Host says:

Host: The formal part of our meeting is now coming to a close, but you are encouraged to stay around afterward to talk, or to **adjourn elsewhere for more informal fellowship.** Are there any announcements related to this meeting? Any announcements of other Samson Society meetings?

Host: As valuable as they are, these meetings are no substitute for daily Christian friendship. Just as our Lord's first disciples were sent into the world two-by-two, we too should look for at least one Christian companion, a fellow-traveler and advisor with whom to share this stretch of the road. We call that person a **Silas.** (*Choose an experienced member of the group*) _____, would you explain briefly what a Silas is and why we need one? (*Then, at the end of the explanation, say to the whole group*) If you are willing to accept new responsibility as a Silas, please raise your hand.

Before we close, let us reaffirm **the Pact** under which our Society operates. [Asks someone to read *The Pact.*]

Host: Let's stand and close with prayer. (*Prays simply for the needs expressed, leads in the Lord's Prayer.*)

Be visible! Register your meeting at samsonsociety.org! (On the main page, click "Start a Meeting.")

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR SHARING

Acceptance	Escape	Joy	Revelation
Accomplishment	Excitement	Kindness	Righteousness
Adulthood	Exercise	Knowledge	Risk
Adventure	Expectations	Laughter	Romance
Advice	Failure	Learning	Sabotage
Anger	Fairy tales	Liberty	Sacrifice
Argument	Faith	Listening	Sadness
Awe	Faithfulness	Longing	Sanity
Beauty	Family	Loss	Secrets
Begging	Fantasy	Love	Self-Care
Belief	Father	Lust	Self-Centeredness
Betrayal	Fatigue	Lying	Self-Discipline
Blame	Fear	Martyrdom	Selfishness
Blindness	Fighting	Masculinity	Service
Boredom	Focus	Medication	Sex
Bravery	Foolishness	Meditation	Shame
Busyness	Forgetfulness	Memory	Sleep
Certainty	Forgiveness	Mission	Solitude
Chaos	Freedom	Mistakes	Spirit
Clarity	Friendship	Moderation	Stealing
Communication	Fulfillment	Mother	Strength
Comparison	Gambling	Nature	Stewardship
Compassion	Generosity	Neediness	Study
Competition	Gentleness	Normality	Superstition
Compromise	Goals	Nourishment	Surrender
Confidentiality	Goodness	Obedience	Suspicion
Confrontation	Gratitude	Patience	Teamwork
Confusion	Greed	Peace	Temptation
Contentment	Grief	Perfection	Tenderness
Control	Growith	Persistence	Tolerance
Counsel	Gullibility	Politeness	Toughness
Courage	Happiness	Power	Transparency
Covetousness	Hatred	Powerlessness	Trust
Creativity	Health	Productivity	Truth
Criticism	Heroes	Profit	Unbelief
Deceit	Hoarding	Promises	Understanding
Defeat	Holiness	Prayer	Vagueness
Defensiveness	Honesty	Pride	Value
Denial	Hope	Progress	Victory
Destructiveness	Humility	Quietness	War
Determination	Hunger	Quitting	Waste
Diet	Identity	Rage	Weakness
Disappointment	Indulgence	Reconciliation	Willingness
Disclosure	Injuries	Recreation	Wisdom
Dishonesty	Insanity	Regret	Women
Distraction	Integrity	Relapse	Wonder
Education	Intimacy	Relaxation	Work
Encouragement	Intoxication	Resentment	Worry
Enemies	Intrigue	Respect	Worship
Enlightenment	Inventory	Rest	Wounds
Envy	Isolation	Responsibility	Youth

THE FACT

1. God exists. In the timeless mystery of the Trinity, He is perfectly harmonious, perfectly whole.
2. God is our Creator. He designed us to live in eternal harmony with Him and each other, and to care for the rest of His creation.
3. Spurning God's fellowship, we all have sinned, forfeiting our created place and losing our spiritual lives.
4. I myself have personally defied God's law and rejected His love. Alienation from Him has produced darkness and chaos in my life, for which I have often blamed others.
5. God has continued to love me, even in my active rebellion, and in Christ has done everything necessary to restore me perfectly to Himself.
6. As I accept responsibility for my sin and find forgiveness in the finished work of Christ, I experience reconciliation with God and am progressively restored to harmony with myself and others.
7. Despite the lingering effects of sin, I am a restored son of the sovereign Lord, whose Spirit is at work in my weakness, displaying His glory and advancing His kingdom.

THE PATH

1. Believing The Fact, I surrender to God in simple faith — making no promises, but merely asking for His aid.
2. I start attending meetings of the Society, and from its members I select a *Silas*, a trustworthy traveling companion for this stretch of the road.
3. In honest detail, I describe to God and to my Silas the course and consequences of my attempts to live apart from God.
4. Encouraged by my Silas and others, I develop the daily disciplines of prayer, study and self-examination. I abandon self-help, asking God instead to do for me what I cannot do for myself.
5. I choose to trust the Body of Christ, weighing the wisdom of my friends when facing decisions and seeking their strength when confronted by temptation.
6. When I can do so without injuring anyone, I make amends for damage I have caused. If direct amends are impossible or inadvisable, I demonstrate my repentance in other ways.
7. I offer myself as a Silas to others. Each day I ask God for the grace to seek His kingdom rather than my own, to serve those He places in my path rather than serving myself.

THE PACT

1. God is the sole owner of the Samson Society and its only authority. No member may speak for the entire Society.
2. All members of the Society are equals — friends and fellow servants, bound by love and honor. No member may command the obedience of another.
3. The Society owns no property, collects no dues or fees, pays no salaries, incurs no debts.
4. The Society is an extension of the Church Universal. It is not a corporate entity and can make no contracts with congregations, denominations, causes or campaigns, regardless of their merit.
5. Any two or more persons who believe the Fact, who agree to follow this Path and join this Pact, may initiate a meeting of the Samson Society.
6. We hold in strictest confidence any personal information shared by other members, unless permission to divulge it is given by any whom its disclosure might affect.
7. Members are fully authorized to create and distribute, freely or for profit, personal explanations and applications of the Society's principles — if they neither alter nor violate its Charter and do not prohibit others from copying their work.

PSALM 23

1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
2. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside the still waters.
3. He restores my soul. He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over.
6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.