

The Blessings of Small Groups

A serene sunset over a body of water with silhouetted rocks in the foreground. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a warm orange and red near the horizon. The water is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the foreground, several dark, jagged rock formations are silhouetted against the water. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Life's Deep Lessons Experienced Through Divine Appointments

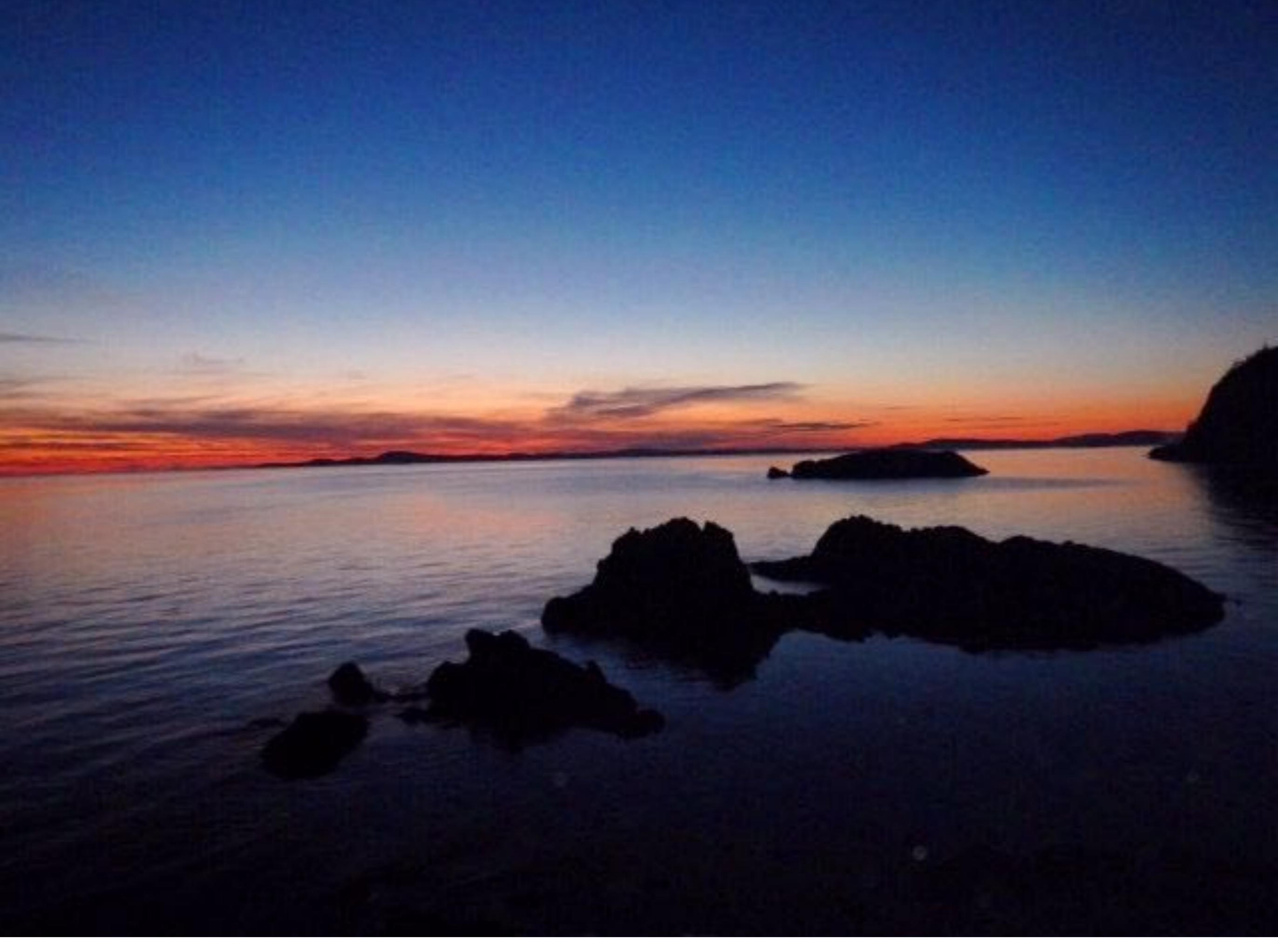
“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father just as you are in me and I am in you.

May they also be in us so that the world may believe the you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me **that they may be one as we are one.** I in them and you in me.

May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”

John 17:20-23





Prevailing Prayer - *The Bible Echo*, September 24, 1894. (EGW)

“We must have a deep, earnest sense of our needs. We must feel our weakness and our dependence upon God, and come to Him with contrition of soul and brokenness of heart. **Our petitions must be offered in perfect submission; every desire must be brought into harmony with the will of God, and His will must be done in us.**

When we come to Him in this manner, Jesus will listen to our prayers, and will answer them; but if we regard iniquity in our hearts, if we cherish any darling sin, we may be assured that no blessing will be given in response to our prayers.

Faith takes God at His word, with or without feeling.
Feeling is no criterion. Great evils have resulted
when Christians have followed feeling.

How do I know that Jesus hears my prayers?—
I know it by His promise.

He says He will hear the needy when they cry unto
Him, and I believe His word.

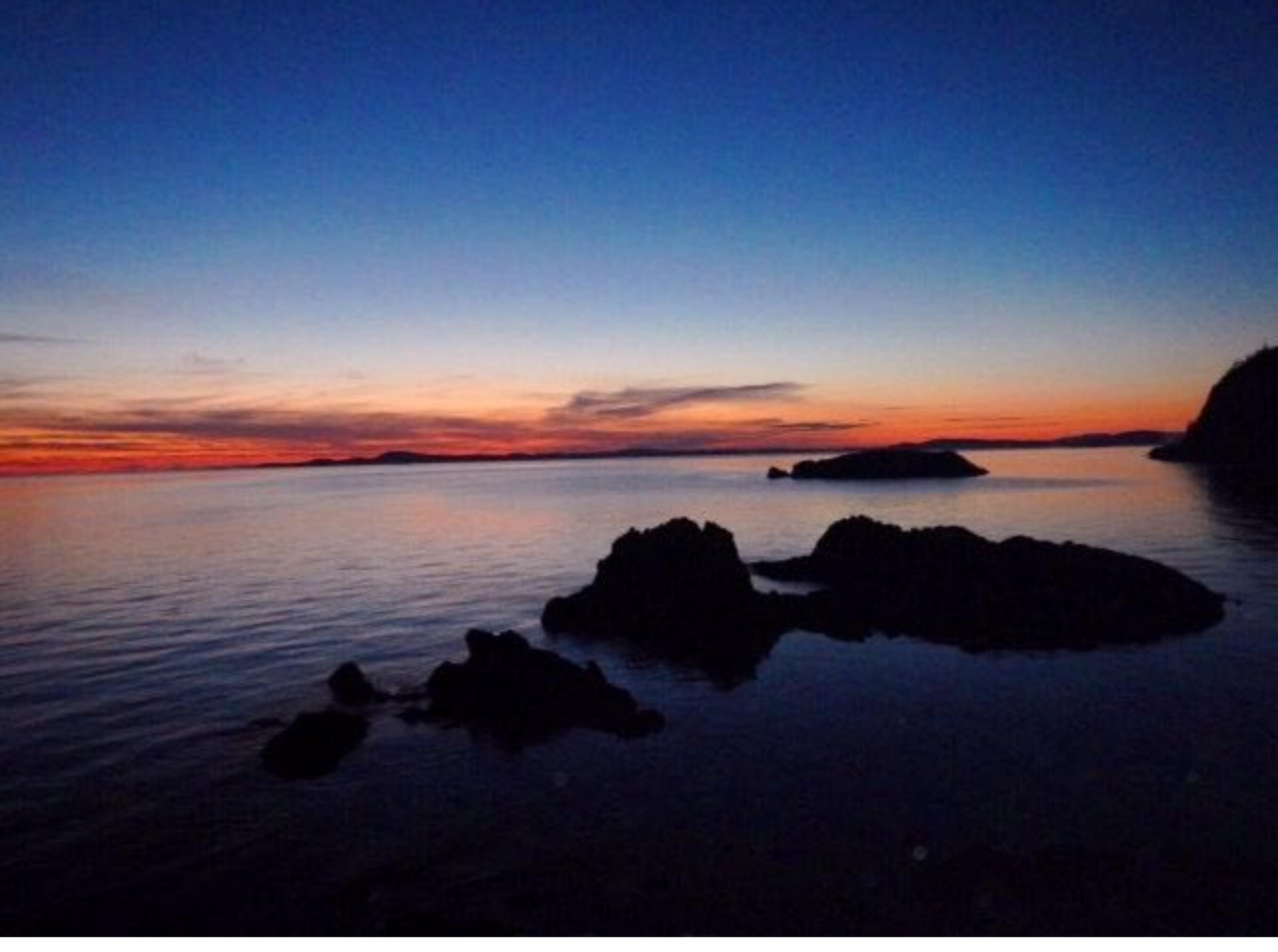
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If we walk in the light, we may come to the throne of grace with holy boldness. We may present the promises of God in living faith, and urge our petitions.

Although we are weak, and erring, and unworthy, "the Spirit helpeth our infirmities." **Those who do not deny self and lift the cross of Christ, will have no courage to approach a heart-searching God.**

We should search the Scriptures daily; for the Word of God is our unerring guide.

We are here in a world of doubt and skepticism. The law of God is made void, unbelief seems to be in the very air we breathe; and to resist all these influences, and **battle successfully against the powers of darkness, requires strong faith and earnest prayer.**



Ellen White quotes on “Small Groups”

“Why do not believers feel a deeper, more earnest concern for those who are out of Christ? Why do not two or three meet together and plead with God for the salvation of some special one, and then for still another? In our churches let companies be formed for service. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men. Let them seek to gather souls from the corruption of the world into the saving purity of Christ’s love.

The **formation of small companies as a basis of Christian effort** has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into small companies, to work not only for the church members, but for unbelievers. If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers.

Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, **pressing together in love and unity**, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others.

Let them **reveal Christlike forbearance and patience**, speaking no hasty words, using the talent of speech to build one another up in the most holy faith.

Let them labor in **Christlike love for those outside the fold, forgetting self** in their endeavor to help others. As they work and pray in Christ's name, their numbers will increase; for the Saviour says: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." Matthew 18:19." (Testimonies to the Church, vol. 7, p. 21)

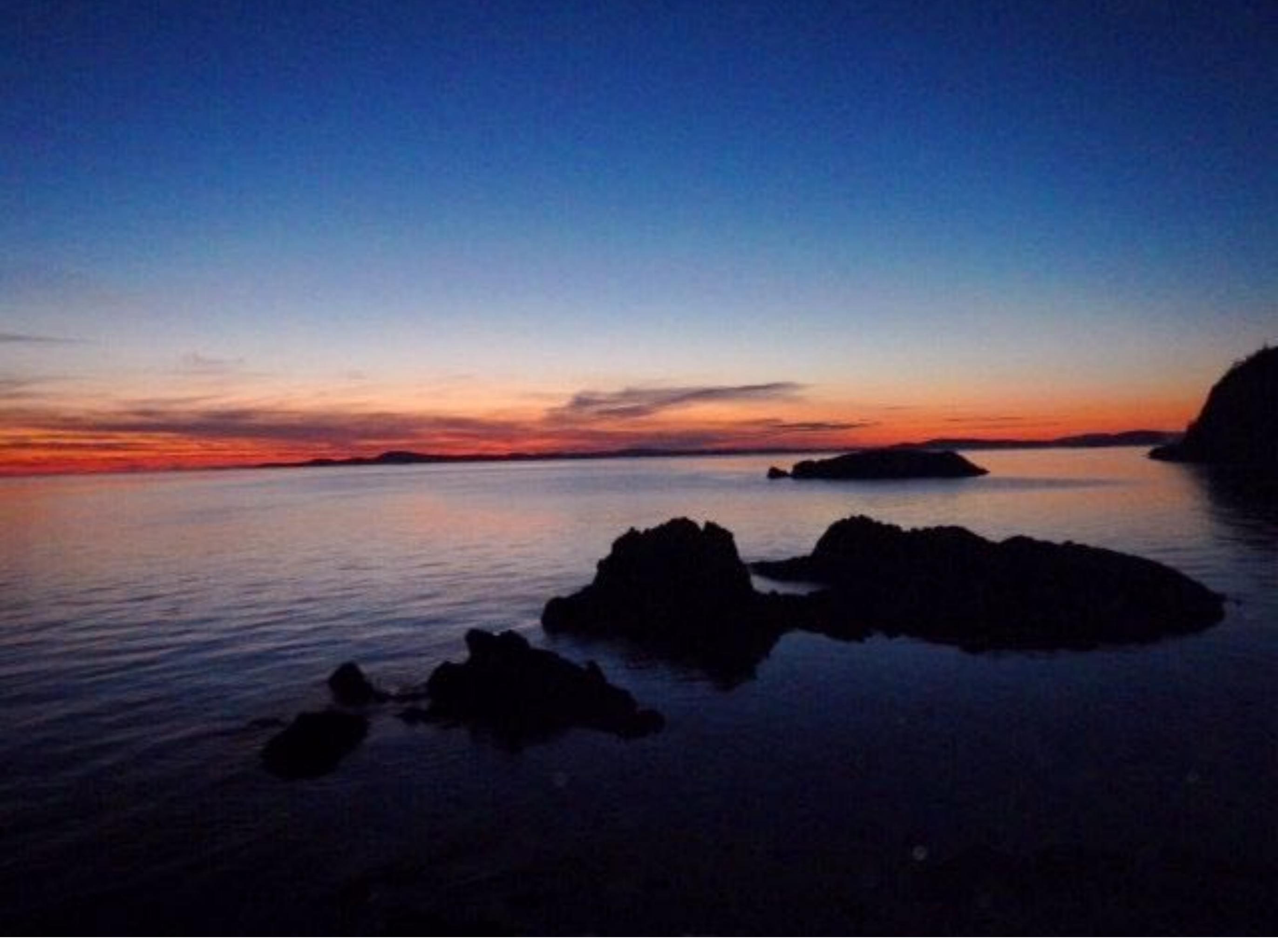
“Let **small companies assemble** in the evening, at noon, or in the early morning to **study the Bible**. Let them have a **season of prayer**, that they may be **strengthened, enlightened, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit**.

This work Christ wants to have done in the heart of every worker. If you yourselves will open the door to receive it, a great blessing will come to you. Angels of God will be in your assembly. You will feed upon the leaves of the tree of life. What testimonies you may bear of the loving acquaintance made with your fellow workers in these precious seasons when seeking the blessing of God. Let each tell his experience in simple words. This will bring more comfort and joy to the soul than all the pleasant instruments of music that could be brought into the churches. Christ will come into your hearts. It is by this means only that you can maintain your integrity.” (Prayer, p. 198)

“To all who are working with Christ I would say, Wherever you can gain access to the people by the fireside, improve your opportunity.

Take your Bible, and open before them its great truths. Your success will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon **your ability to find your way to the heart.** By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse.

The presentation of Christ in the family, by the fireside, and in small gatherings in private houses, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.” (Gospel Workers, p. 193)



What was your experience in the Parenting small group like?

Very positive. Something I **looked forward** to.

Very warm and rewarding

It was nice to be in a small group, to get to **know** people better, to share ideas, opinions and experiences.

I appreciated very much the atmosphere of a small group. I felt as if I **drew closer to each individual and the group**; we were able to **share our trials and joys** with each other in a way we might not have in a larger group. Altogether it was a very encouraging and uplifting experience.

I had a positive experience in a home setting getting to **know** others.

How would you describe your experience to others who have not been a part of small groups before?

It's good to be a part of a small group - it's easier to open up, to **relate to the others** in the group

Small groups are a good way to get to **know** each other in a non-church setting.

Very rewarding in that you go to **know** one another in a more deeper and fulfilling way.

It was Enriching, positive, a feeling of **belonging**, great fellowship

It was really nice doing small groups because you got to **know people well** you would not know otherwise.

It was good to get together with other people who had **similar challenges and pray together**

**What was the most positive thing you
learned or experienced
by being a part of this small group?**

I learned from watching others how to be more loving and kind.

The feeling of belonging to a group, that it's OK to be **vulnerable**

That I'm **not the only one going through discouragements**
and that there is always hope in Jesus and that people care.

People tend to be more **open** to share their experiences when
they are in a small group (sharing with people they **know and
trust**) Encouragement!

To **gain advice form other parents** of their life experiences with
their children

**Any other additional comments regarding small groups
(including how you would change things)?**

Happiness is **sharing one another's burdens and high points**. Happiness is being a part of a **loving church family**.

I wish any small group will also be a **prayer group** — when the people will **pray more together for different concerns**. Also, to find a **practical purpose** - like helping people, organizing projects for children, etc

I also appreciated not having to drive so far for the fellowship study. A small group allows those who live further from the church to attend a study closer to home.

I believe **sharing a meal together** is a good thing even if you only have 1 or 2 people coming.



