



## WHAT SHOULD A SMALL GROUP LOOK LIKE?

The following is an example of what a typical small group meeting might look like. This is just a sample small group but contains some important components of small groups that might be good for you to include. Not all of the components need necessarily be present in every meeting.

### SAMPLE SMALL GROUP

#### **1. Small Group Start (start on time) – 5-10 minutes**

- Welcome and introductions if a newcomer is present
- Ice breaker exercises at outset of group
- Prayer to open up the evening

#### **2. Worship – 15 minutes**

- Testimonies
- Singing
- Reading a psalm together
- Reporting answered prayer
- Few silent moments over music/ lit candle – meditate on a verse

#### **3. Study and Discussion – 45 minutes**

- See 'Small Group Resources' and decide together on a good curriculum/ book
- Have someone (most likely the leader?) devise questions

#### **4. Prayer and Share – 20 minutes**

- Can split into smaller groups
- Share challenges and heartbreaks
- Share victories and celebrate together
- Pray for one another and for unbelieving family/ friends

## **5. Small Group Focus Time – 15 minutes**

- What is your particular focus?
  - o Outreach plans?
  - o Serving?
  - o Organizing social events?
  - o Mission?

## **6. Fellowship Time – 20-30 minutes**

- Drinks and Snacks
- Catching Up

It is important to decide how to approach certain elements relative to your small group comfort level. For example, not everyone in your small group may be comfortable with singing in such an intimate setting. It is important to be aware that not everyone is comfortable praying aloud in front of people, especially newer believers. It is thus important to remember to clearly communicate how the prayer time will work.

Other important elements of small groups to consider:

### **THE 'OPEN CHAIR' CONCEPT**

Since the beginning God has desired to expand the number of people who know Him and are committed to Him. It ought to be the churches hope and desire that people would come and find refuge, hope and community within its fold. It is our calling to make disciples (Matt 28:29-30). “Jesus used the concept of the open chair to develop relationships with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery, and the twelve disciples – and his invitation continues today...Part of discipleship is opening the chair to those who are not involved in the biblical community. This includes seekers, fringe Christians, and committed believers who are seeking fellowship.”<sup>1</sup>

Small Groups ought to be careful to avoid the ‘closed cloister’ posture. As believers we ought to be open to expand the people of God and see the growth of our group as an opportunity rather than a threat. This is a part of being mission minded.

- Everyone in the group should be involved in the process

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Donahue, *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002): 162

- The group should pray that God will fill the ‘open chair’
- The group should occasionally discuss potential people to invite

**APPRENTICE LEADERS**

A good small group size is somewhere between six and twelve. If a group grows to be too much beyond twelve it becomes harder to have the kind of closeness that makes for effective community. As such, one of the exciting aspects of an effective small group ministry is the opportunity (and necessity) of growth through small group multiplication. One of the most effective ways to do this is through the identification of potential new leaders and then calling them to be apprentice leaders within their current group context. The apprentice leader(s) learns from the group leader and is given the opportunity to lead certain weeks in order to gain confidence and build their skills. At an appropriate time this leader is then ‘released’ from their small group with the laying on of hands and commissioning to birth a new group. It is important to identify and develop such apprentice leaders in order to see a fruitful ministry multiplication.

**SMALL GROUP TYPES**

The beauty of small groups is that they come in many different types. Here are just a few options:

AGE/STAGE RELATED	Youth, Young Adult, Couples, Families, Seniors or Inter-generational
GEOGRAPHICAL	Groups cluster based on where people live within the city
NEED BASED	Recovery Groups, Grief Support
OUTREACH BASED	Overseas Missions Group, Social Justice Emphasis, Activist Group – regularly serving in the community
INTEREST BASED	Sports, Outdoor types, Hobby based
NEW BELIEVER BASED	After-Alpha Group, Getting to Grips with the Basics

and many, many more...

In a nutshell, a small group is a place for us to practically outwork the 'one another's' of Scripture.

- Love One Another (Jn 13:34, 35 and 1 Jn 3:11)
- Pray for One Another (Jms 5:16)
- Bear One Another's Burdens (Gal 6:2)
- Be at Peace with One Another (1 Thess 5:13)
- Live in Harmony with One Another (Rom 12:16)
- Accept One Another (Rom 15:5)
- Serve One Another (Gal 5:13, 1 Pet 4:9)
- Care for One Another (1 Cor 12:25)
- Be Kind, Compassionate and Forgiving to One Another (Eph 4:32, Col 3:13)
- Teach and Admonish (Instruct) One Another (Col 3:16, Rom 15:14)
- Encourage and Build One Another Up (1 Thess 5:11, Rom 14:19)
- Comfort One Another (1 Thess 4:18, Heb 3:13)
- Practice Hospitality Ungrudgingly to One Another (1 Pet 4:9)
- Clothe Yourselves with Humility Toward One Another (1 Pet 5:5)
- Confess Your Sins to One Another (Jms 5:16)
- Do Not Grumble Against One Another (Jms 5:9)