

# Principles for Small Groups



## Small

Keep groups small. Start groups around circles of relationships, people who already know one another. Meet where they usually meet – in a home, a café, or a park. With larger groups, break up in to smaller groups (3 to 5) for discussion.

## Learn to Grow

Everyone learns to grow on their own by doing the following:

- Telling others about Jesus
- Learning from the Bible
- Talking with God (prayer)
- Helping & encouraging others
- Facing difficulty and hard times

Being able to grow on your own does not mean that the group is not needed. The group encourages, supports, and prays for each member as they grow. They provide a safe place for their members as they struggle with failures, weaknesses, and sins. They witness and celebrate one another's victories and strengths. They grow together as they grow separately.

When a child is learning to walk, he may fall many times, but there is a person or perhaps several people who keep encouraging him to try again until he succeeds. This is the same principle at work in a small group. Gathering in groups is always necessary because either someone needs your encouragement and support, or you need encouragement and support from others. To stay away from the fellowship of a group is to rob the group (the body of Christ) of encouragement and support.

## Consider Everyone a Potential Leader

View everyone as a potential leader, both before and after they follow Jesus. Leaders are usually unpaid and without formal training. But they can influence and inspire others to follow Jesus, and then to continue on the journey with Him. They can share their stories and their failures and victories so that others can be encouraged to grow in the same way.

## Obey and Train

Our groups are relationship and obedience-based, not just focused on knowledge. We follow Jesus by obeying the Bible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Each meeting, make specific and practical commitments to grow in some way. Then at the next meeting, review these commitments and share how well each member carried them out. Don't make one another feel judged when they fail, instead, encourage them that the Lord will help them as they continue to commit to growth. You are becoming fishers of men by creating disciples who live and love like Jesus – learning how to obey everything He commanded. This creates an environment where loving Jesus means obeying Him. It creates a culture

of love, acceptance, and forgiveness, where members feel safe enough to share their struggles and receive encouragement and prayer.

## Start New Groups through Mentoring and Multiplication

Focus on starting new groups instead of growing large groups. When a group gets too large, it becomes difficult for everyone to share. When it is small, there can be a lot more interaction. Meet with new leaders as they start new groups. Train them to do the same for others. Keep everyone connected for ongoing training and accountability.

## Discuss & Discover

Focus on the Bible. Trust the Holy Spirit to help each person discover the meaning of Scripture. Lead through asking questions rather than preaching. Try to allow everyone to participate.

Preaching is one person sharing. Discussion should involve everyone. Try to help members rely on and learn from the Holy Spirit instead of you, as the leader.

## Consider 'SPECK' questions of each passage

Is there a **Sin** that I need to confess in this passage?

Is there a **Prayer/Praise** to offer or a **Promise** to claim?

Is there an **Example** I need to follow?

Is there a **Command** I need to obey?

Is there **Knowledge** I need to gain?