

## Small Group Leaders Guide

### **Agenda & Time Allotments for Off-Campus Groups**

#### **Preface:**

This document is simply a guide to aide in structuring a Small Group meeting. Nothing in this guide is a rule or set in stone. Each group must be led by the Spirit of God and must be able to adjust as His Spirit leads. However, that does not alleviate the responsibility for the leader to come to every meeting with a well thought out and prepared plan and message. Always remember, as leaders we are showing and teaching what God has shown and taught us. Additional guides are available to give ideas and different methods that can be considered for each of the areas below.

#### **Suggested Meeting Agenda & Time Allotments** **(Suggested Total Time 1 ½ - 2 ½ hours)**

1. **Arrival/Fellowship** (15 mintues)

Greet everyone individually as they arrive. This is just a time to chat, get refreshments, hang out, etc.

**DANGER:** Don't let this linger too long as this can slowly consume more and more time, causing other areas to be cut short.

**Option:** Designate 1 meeting a month or every 6 weeks to be just a social. It can be at someone's house, a restaurant, playground, etc. to allow for time to just relax and hang out.

2. **Announcements & Future Planning** (5 minutes)

Tell them of any recent events or upcoming events (SG, church wide, etc.). Try to keep brief. Utilize email to communicate these.

3. **Sharing/Reflection** (10 minutes)

This is a great time for people to share about recent prayer requests, God's work in and around their lives, issues, praises, struggles etc.

**KEY:** The more openness, honesty, and vulnerability the leader shows the group in responding to the questions and sharing of their own lives, the more likely the group members will be to share their true feelings. Emphasize the importance of listening and discovering new things about each other. The leader must model good listening skills.

#### **Dangers:**

- a. There are some who may share more than others and dominate the conversations. Try to gently draw the silent ones out by asking them questions directly (starting light and walking deeper as led) and intentionally engaging them.

- b. For larger groups, this can consume the entire time. Don't feel bad cutting it off by saying something like "I hate to stop, but we need to move on..."

4. **Prayer** (10 minutes)

**KEY:** See the **Small Group Leaders Guide – Prayer Time Facilitation** for some tips and ideas on different ways to facilitate prayer within the group.

**Option:** Designate 1 meeting a month or every 6 weeks to be just a time of sharing and prayer. Another option is have frequent meetings where this time is expanded (but no more than every-other meeting). See the next page for additional insight.

5. **Bible Study** (30 – 60 minutes)

Always keep in mind the people have come to learn from God as He speaks through His Word using you. The central focus of the time should always be the Word of God. Remember, our goal is to teach the Bible not teach a Bible study and the difference can be eternal.

**KEY:** See the **Small Group Leaders Guide – How to Study the Bible** and the **Small Group Leaders Guide – How to Teach the Bible** for guidance and insight.

6. **Mission Going Forward** (15 minutes)

**KEY:** Be sure to tie all lessons to our vision, "Reach People. Make Disciples." Remember, all true Disciples of Christ are intended to be Disciple-Makers.

Other suggested orders of the meetings:

1. Arrival/Fellowship (15 minutes)
2. Announcements & Future Planning (5 minutes)
3. Bible Study (30 – 60 minutes)
4. Sharing/Reflection (10 - 20 minutes)
5. Mission Going Forward (15 minutes)
6. Prayer (10 – 20 minutes)

Or

1. Arrival/Fellowship (15 minutes)
2. Prayer (10 – 20 minutes)
3. Sharing/Reflection (10 - 20 minutes)
4. Bible Study (30 – 60 minutes)
5. Mission Going Forward (15 minutes)
6. Announcements & Future Planning (5 minutes)

Another option related to Prayer & Sharing is to dedicate 1 meeting every 5 or 6 weeks to sharing and prayer. A suggested agenda for that meeting would look something like this.

1. Arrival/Fellowship (15 minutes)
2. Announcements & Future Planning (5 minutes)
3. Sharing & Prayer (30 – 90 minutes)