

Small Group Guidelines for Church Ministries

What are some purposes for using small groups in ministry?

A PURPOSE: To Glorify God

When we meet in effective small groups:

- **We image God's nature by reflecting the Trinity and God's relational attributes that require community:**

Fellowship / Love / Service / Worship / Outreach

- **We display the unity in Christ that He establishes and then commands us to maintain. A small group can provide a setting that reflects union in Christ, glorifying God.**

Philippians 2:1-4 English Standard Version (ESV)

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 (ESV) ¹¹ To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **We satisfy the yearning for community that God gives us when He adopts us as heirs into the family of God, the desire to be with His people, to be kingdom-focused. This yearning transcends race, age, gender, socio-economic status, etc.**

Romans 12:5 (ESV)

⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.

John 17:10-11 (ESV) ¹⁰ All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ And I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

- **We model the example of "koinonia," the fellowship of the Gospel with other believers for a united purpose**

1 John 1:3 (ESV) ³ that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Acts 2:42 (ESV) ⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

A Purpose: To be transformed, both individually and corporately

When we meet in effective small groups:

- **We are individually transformed:** Romans 12:2-4 English Standard Version (ESV) ² *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

- **We are corporately transformed:**

A small group will be most effective when guided by a TRANSFORMING kingdom model of discipleship. Such a model provides for the content of the Gospel presented in the context of relationships. This model embraces intentional transformation opportunities in these three elements of kingdom discipleship:

- **Kingdom Focused Heart:** Safe place to examine our hearts & discover our idols
Mark 12:30 (ESV) ³⁰ *And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'*
- **Biblically Reformed Mind:** Learn from others to apply God's Word to our lives
1 Thessalonians 2:13 (SSV) *And we also thank God constantly^[a] for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men^[b] but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.*
- **Service Driven Life:** Be the hands of Christ
2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)¹⁶ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God^[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

Scripture both commands believers participate in transformation and promises God-given results in a plethora of ways!

Romans 7:4 (ESV) ⁴ *Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*

- **Fulfill Titus 2 & other calls to discipleship**

Titus 2 1-7 *You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine.* ² *Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.* ³ *Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good.* ⁴ *Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children,* ⁵ *to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.* ⁶ *Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled.* ⁷ *In everything set them an example by doing what is good.*

- **Use our gifts**

Romans 12:3-4 (ESV) ³ *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.* ⁴ *For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function...*

Galatians 5:13 (ESV) ¹³ *For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.*

- **Encourage and build up the body of Christ**

I Peter 4:9 (ESV) ⁹ *Show hospitality to one another without grumbling.*

Galatians 6:2 (ESV) ² *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

James 5:16 (ESV) ¹⁶ *Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.*

Ephesians 4:25 (ESV) ²⁵ *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

- **Get along! Build, embody, and reflect unity.**

Romans 15:5 (ESV) ⁵ *May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus*

Also: Mark 9:50, John 6:43, Romans 12:6; Romans 15:7, I Corinthians 11:33, Galatians 5:15, 5:26; Ephesians 4:2, 4:32; Colossians 3:13, I Thessalonians 5:15, James 4:11, 5:9

- **Spur one another on to good works** Hebrews 10:23-24 (ESV) ²³ *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.* ²⁴ *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works,*

Love one another John 13:34, 15:12, 17; Romans 12:10, 13:8; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:2; I Thess 3:12, 4:9; I Peter 1:22, 5:14; I John 3:11, 4:7, 11; II John 5

- **Show humility with one another** John 13:14, Romans 12:10, 16; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3; I Peter 5:5

- **Gospel each other** Ephesians 5:19 (ESV) ¹⁹ *addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart,*

- **Mind the “don’ts” with each other.** John 6:43, Romans 14:3, Galatians 5:15, 5:26, Col 3:9, I Thess 5:15, James 4:11, 5:9

A Purpose: To Be a Light to the Nations

Genesis 12:2 (ESV) ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

Isaiah 49:6b & Acts 13:47 *I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*"

Matthew 5:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that^[a] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

1 Peter 2:9-10 (ESV)

⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

When the Gospel creates the fruit of a kingdom-focused heart, a Biblically reformed mind, and a service-driven life, the Gospel is validated and we ARE a light to the nations, glorifying God in all arenas of life. We become lights on a hill to:

Each other
The Household of God
The unsaved

- **Share the Gospel with the unredeemed** Being part of a small group whose members bring friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers allows us to be a light for Jesus.

Matt 28:19-20 (ESV) ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in^[b] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

- **Fulfill the "Micah Mandate"**

Micah 6:8 (ESV)

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,^[b]
and to walk humbly with your God?

- **Use our gifts outside the body**