

small group basics

purpose:

- To grow in relationship with God and each other. To be disciples making disciples.
"We belong to each other, and each of us needs all the others." (Rom. 12:5, NLT)
"Each of us finds our meaning and function as a part of His body." (Rom. 12:5, MSG)

how to start a group:

- Pray about who, what, where, when, and how
- Establish an initial time and place to meet.
- Call each man and invite him to meet to discuss the formation of a men's small group.

at the first meeting:

- Have each man introduce himself and express what he is looking for in a small group.
- Outline a group model based on Acts 2:42 (the early Church):

components of a group:

1. Read God's word. We recommend studying the Gospel of Mark using the Young Life Ventures guide.
2. Fellowship. Share and talk about Life...what's good?...what's hard? – The coordinator plays a vital role in modeling to the rest of the group.
 - a. Relationships (God, marriage, family, friends, enemies)
 - b. Work
 - c. Dreams and Pains
3. Share a meal together
4. Prayer
 - a. Learning to pray for others
 - b. Learning to be prayed for
 - c. Freedom not to pray out loud

agreements:

1. Confidentiality – what's said in the group stays in the group
2. Avoid giving advice – seek to listen and understand what another is saying and feeling
3. Growth in accountability – not mandated but invited as trust grows
4. An initial three-month commitment to the group, followed by an evaluation

suggestions:

1. Quarterly dinner to allow more time for sharing
2. Annual dinner with wives and/or dates
3. Annual weekend away to share life stories and deepen relationships

coordinator's role:

1. Follow Christ actively
2. Care for the group members with a willingness to serve them, particularly through listening
3. Pray regularly for the guys both inside and outside of group meetings.
4. Follow-up with guys through a phone call, etc., especially when seeing a particular need.
5. Lead by example: be vulnerable, sharing your own struggles and pain.

coordinator's group facilitation skills:

1. Listen: Two ears, one mouth
2. Initiate: Asks questions (How? What? Where? When?) (not... Do? Is?)
3. Prepare
4. Wait: Silence is good
5. Direct: encourage everyone to participate, manage domination, keep time moving sensitively through components
6. Mentor: Love your men, pray for your men, and encourage obedience. The "show how" method:
 1. I do, you watch
 2. I do, you help
 3. We do together
 4. You do, I help
 5. You do, I watch
 6. You do, someone else watches