

Community Groups:

How To Run A Group



Responsibilities and Requirements for Leaders

All small group leaders must be actively involved in our congregational life (for at least six months), having gone through the *Introduction to Faith Bible Church* class and signed our *Covenant of Fellowship Agreement*.

Two Non-Requirements to be a Small Group Leader:

1. Being a perfect person
2. Having the gift of teaching

Three Practical Requirements to be a Small Group Leader:

1. A sincere love of God

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." — Deuteronomy 6:5

2. A sincere love of people

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the Father loves whoever has been born of Him." — I John 5:1

3. A sincere love of Scripture

"In the way of your testimonies I delight as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways. I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word." — Psalm 119:14-16

The Heart of Hospitality

"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality." — Romans 12:12-13

"Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. . . Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling." — I Peter 1:22; 4:8-9

- Hospitality is not the same as entertaining. Entertaining in your home seeks to impress others, whereas hospitality seeks to serve others. Entertaining is focused on things, whereas hospitality is focused on people. Entertaining is concerned with what your guests think of you, whereas hospitality is concerned with the welfare of your guests, desiring to provide them biblical comfort and edification.

The Four “Fs” of Leading a Small Group

1. FILL UP

— Key Question: *Who can I invite to be a part of our small group?*

Answer: **ANYONE!**

How do people become involved in a small group at FBC?

- * Personal invitation
- * Inquiry through the office
- * Online small group directory (in process)

2. FOLLOW UP

— Key Question: *How do I prepare for my small group meeting?*

BEFORE SMALL GROUP

- a) Pray for your group and the individuals who are participating.
- b) Be intentional about thinking through and setting up the physical surroundings in a small group gathering. Any one of the following can hinder a small group meeting:
 - Too much distance between the participants when seated
 - People sitting in rows, unable to see each other
 - People sitting behind other people, rather than in a circle
 - Telephone interruptions
- c) Plan for refreshments
 - As the host, consider providing coffee, tea or drinks at each meeting
 - Consider using a rotation to bring snacks
 - Plan an occasional cookout or meal together (see below)
- d) Think through the needs associated with childcare. (see Childcare Options in the Appendix)
- d) Communicate regularly through text/email/phone (prayer requests and meeting reminders)

AFTER SMALL GROUP

- a) Check on anyone who is absent to touch base and find out how they are doing
- b) If someone is silent in the meeting, follow up at an appropriate opportunity
- c) If a situation arises where someone appears to need additional care/counseling, contact Buck

d) Provide opportunities for further fellowship as a group. Occasional get-togethers outside of the normal small group meeting time are healthy for a small group; they build unity, trust, and friendships. Plan a special Christmas gathering, a Super Bowl Party, a Game Night, a picnic at a park... be creative!! Groups that decide to take the summer off from their normal meetings might schedule periodic socials throughout the summer. If other group members are willing to host an occasional event, this helps give a sense of ownership and responsibility for the group, provides an opportunity to practice hospitality toward fellow believers, and opens another window into their lives by allowing others in their home.

3. FACILITATE

— Key Question: *How do I successfully lead my small group?*

a) Begin and end on time consistently.

- “*Trend Time*” versus “*Trend Event*” (Which are you?)

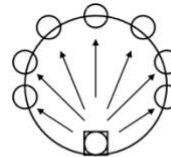
b) Encourage everyone to participate in the discussion.

Your job is to be a *facilitator*, not a *lecturer*.

- Open-ended vs. Closed Ended Questions (Anything else? How about...? Someone else?)
- Don't answer your own questions
- Don't be afraid of (temporary) silence - give people an time to think and reflect
- Give affirmation whenever you can
- Try to involve everyone
- Be a good listener — provide support, not quick fixes
- Practice reflective listening
- Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit

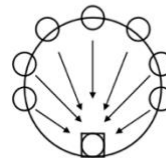
Not this:

Leader doing all the talking



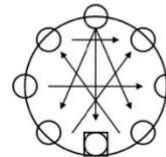
Not this:

Group responding only to the leader



But this:

*Group interacting as
the leader **guides** the discussion.*



c) Always be prepared

- Be prepared with questions
- Be prepared to discuss the lesson
- Be prepared for the unexpected (for the Holy Spirit to work)
- Be prepared for controversial or hot button topics that often arise — How?
- Point people to Jesus (not your position or a political party)
- Point people to the Scriptures (encourage them to be a Berean - Acts 17:11)

- Point people to the Staff (nothing wrong with saying, “*That’s a great question for Pastor...*”)
 - Point people to this Statement: *In the essentials we have unity, in the non-essentials we have liberty, in all things we show love.*
- Be prepared to guard the discussion. It is the leader’s responsibility to step in and stop inappropriate sharing. Below are a few situations to watch for. . .
- *Don’t allow people to confess anyone’s faults* (particularly their spouse’s) but their own. Gossiping or griping about another person is not appropriate.
 - *Don’t allow doctrinal discussion to become divisive or argumentative.* Healthy discussion, even disagreement, regarding the tenets of the faith should be encouraged, but must always be motivated and guided by love.
 - *Don’t entertain negative attitudes toward the church* The small group leader is expected to support the mission of Faith Bible Church, and its philosophy of ministry. Encourage anyone with a specific concern to bring it to the elders. Concerns for the church can be talked about by the small group in a healthy, positive way that encourages ownership (“Is there something we could do to help in this area?” etc.)
 - *Don’t allow one person’s continual problem become the focus of the group.* There are bound to be persons in groups that require extra care. Some of these people can be cared for and ministered to within the context of a small group; others may need help from someone professional or someone outside the group. Sound judgment is required here.
- d) Deal with problem people immediately (complainers, correctors, controllers, confusers)
- Set clear rules/boundaries at the beginning of each group
 - Address the situation broadly in the group
 - Try to make the person an ally
 - Pull the problem person aside privately to discuss the issue
 - Ask for help from Pastor Mark or Pastor Buck
- e) Provide care
- Give and receive the one another ministries (Heb. 3:13)
- f) Communicate with the Pastoral Staff (Mark/Buck) regularly.
- g) Have fun together!
- h) Serve together!

4. FINISH STRONG

— Key Question: *Who (and how) am I training to be my replacement?*

- a) *Evaluate* — Be on the alert for potential new small group leaders. Ask God for the wisdom and discernment to do this. Characteristics to look for:
- Loves Jesus, loves the Church, and loves the lost
 - Listens to others, includes others in conversation
 - Hold Scripture as their ultimate authority for truth and life
 - Eager to serve the needs of others
 - Humble
 - Actively involved in the life of FBC

b) **Encourage** — Affirm their giftedness and ask your potential apprentice to consider joining you to train for potential future group leadership.

- Most people will have some reservations and may even fear they are unqualified or unprepared for the responsibilities of leadership.
- Discuss any of their concerns with them and reaffirm that they understand that you will help them develop their skills and confidence as a leader.
- Communicate with Mark/Buck regarding any potential apprentices.

c) **Empower** — Give them responsibilities within your group. Share ministry!

- Here are four practical steps to equip others to apprentice:

- I do and you watch
- I do and you help
- You do and I help
- You do and I applaud

Key Components of a Small Group Meeting

✓ **Informal Fellowship** - A time to greet one another and informally catch up on what's been happening in their lives. This is typically more casual and relaxed, and often includes refreshments or even dinner together. Nevertheless, it is still an opportunity for ministry. Be intentional about making others feel welcome, providing encouragement, asking good questions, and engaging with one another.

✓ **Bible Study** - Studying the Word together is an integral part of our small group ministry. Therefore, essential to this goal is studying the *Bible* with a view toward *personal application*. For help in choosing what to study, please see the list of recommended resources in the Appendix. It would also be helpful to consider the following:

- If the group is going to help decide what to study, it would be beneficial for the leader to have a few suggestions available, while also allowing group members to add their own ideas as well.
- Some studies require 'homework' outside of the actual group time. Clearly communicate how much time each person will need to spend preparing — be realistic.
- As the leader, you are the main facilitator and need to take responsibility for the study, whether you personally lead the discussion or occasionally delegate this to someone else.
- Possible Bible study ideas include: studying a book of the Bible; studying a biblical topic; reading and discussing a book together; reviewing and talking about Sunday's sermon.

✓ **Prayer and Accountability** - Depending on the size and make-up of your group, you may decide to remain together while sharing prayer requests and praying, or you may find it more helpful to divide into smaller groups to enable more personal sharing. It is often wise to split up men and women for this time of sharing and prayer to make it more welcoming for people to grow in their ability to be transparent.

- Encourage individuals to write down prayer requests (or even keep a prayer journal) to better facilitate praying for one another during the week. Encourage people to keep track of God's answers to prayer over the course of time—what a joy to remember and reflect on God's faithfulness together!
- Finally, make sure that you set aside time to *actually pray together*. This is a special opportunity to serve one another and corporately seek the Lord. Be careful not to let this opportunity get squeezed out at the end of your meeting.