



# BIBLE STUDY IN HOMES

Try it, you'll like it!



# Home groups. They aren't new.

*Acts 20:20 You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.*

Church planters use homes to start churches in the U.S.

Church planters start churches overseas in homes.

Many churches use both S.S. classes and home groups.

Some churches use home groups exclusively and have hundreds and thousands of members in Bible study.

I was in a home Bible study back in the 70s and loved it!



# They expand the space of your church.

It is expensive to build new buildings to provide more space for Bible study.

Sometimes it is hard to add another hour for Bible study – like using 9:30 and 11:00 for Bible study at your church. It can sometimes be a little complicated.

Sometimes there are a few classes that have the right size rooms, and the other rooms are less desirable. It is frustrating to try to grow a class with a small, cramped space.





# They improve the comfort.

Bible study is best when people are comfortable with one another and with the space they meet in.

Homes are often more comfortable and relaxed for people to meet in for an hour or more.

Homes are often quieter for undistracted discussion.

Home Bible study is less rushed. No bells are going to ring.

People don't have to dress up as much as a Sunday morning.

A home setting is more personal and informal.





They expand the reach of your church.

They reach people who work or can't come on Sundays.

They reach friends who will come to a home but are nervous about going to an unfamiliar church and being in a crowd.

They help the church meet all over the city. If the home study is targeting a certain part of the city, then the travel time is shorter.

They help church members reach their neighbors. We had a study on marriage for couples who lived on our street and didn't attend any church.

They allow Bible study to happen seven days a week.



# They let you experiment.

They don't have to be like a traditional S.S. class.

They can be longer – 1 ½ to 2 hours including social time.

They can be smaller. A S.S. class with three people can be awkward. Three or four people is okay in a home.

You can share a meal. You can have games afterwards.

You can use a 5-10-minute video on a large screen TV.

You can have more discussion and less lecture.

You can take turns with a different leader every week.

You can sit in a circle, not rows of chairs.



# They should be discussion-oriented.

Sitting in a circle on a comfortable sofa is the perfect setting to relax and have some great discussions.

Let people share what stressed them out last week.

Let people share what they were thankful for last week.

Let people talk about what they remember from the study and discussion last week in your group.

Let people talk about what they discovered about God and about people as they read today's Bible verses.

Ask people to choose who they identify with from the story.  
(Example: the Father, the prodigal son, or the older brother)





# Closed or Open Groups?

There are pros and cons to both approaches:

## Open

Pro: A new person can come join you any week.

Pro: If you have 3 and would rather have 6 people coming.

Con: It may get crowded if too many people come.

Con: If you are studying a certain topic or book that lasts 6 to 12 weeks, then a new person will miss important content.

Con: It may disrupt the trust level within the group.

My suggestion:

Have a closed group and ask group members to make a short commitment to attend every week for 6 to 10 weeks. Then you can restart your group and invite new guests to join.



# Homework or No Homework?

Homework is always better. Do homework.

It take personal engagement in several ways to learn and retain new information and gain confidence in application.

Homework can be before you meet.

- ◇ Read these verses, read this chapter, answer these questions, memorize this verse before our meeting.

Homework can be after you meet.

- ◇ Look for a way to apply this to your life this week
- ◇ Find a person to tell this Bible story to this week.



# What do we study?

There are several options to choose from:

1. A scripture passage.
2. Read a spiritual book and discuss each chapter including several verses that go along with the chapter you read.
3. Use a question-and-answer book. Each chapter will have about 15-20 questions and a scripture verse to look up for each question.
4. A video of a person speaking (only use about 10 minutes) then discuss what they talked about.
5. Have 10 prepared questions about last Sunday's sermon.





# Be creative.

You can create a home-based small group in several ways:

- ◇ Three or four families meet together – parents and kids
- ◇ A women's group or a men's group
- ◇ A college group or a group for young single adults
- ◇ A young couple's group focused on newlywed issues
- ◇ A senior adult group
- ◇ A divorce-recovery support group or grief-recovery
- ◇ An addiction-recovery support group
- ◇ A group of neighbors from different churches or no church background at all



# *Always develop new leaders. Always.*

*Should the same person lead the meeting every week? No.*

*Should the same person pray, read the Bible, ask the questions and bring the food? No, spread it around.*

*Can one person prepare but have someone else lead? Yes.*

*◇ For example, someone could write 10 questions to go with last Sunday's sermon, but a different person can ask the questions and facilitate the discussion.*

*Can a leader be a new Christian? Yes. Look for maturity, passion and personality but it doesn't matter if they have been a Christian for 3 years or 30 years. Coach them.*



# When do we stop meeting?

There is no hard and fast rule.

I have seen small groups agree ahead of time to meet for 1 year and then quit.

I have also seen small groups that met every week and stayed together for 15 years.

The goal is not to just cover the book or content.

The goal is to make disciples. To bring the people in your group to greater faith, hope and love.

Not greater head knowledge, but life-transformation.





# Homes vs Meeting at Church

It isn't a competition.

The goal is helping people grow and reaching new people who have never studied the Bible and have never put their faith in Christ.

The church building will reach people who can't/won't go to a home study.

The home study will reach people who can't/won't go to a church building.

Use both.



# Examples

- ◇ I was in a Friday night group for two years. 30 people split up into smaller groups all over the house.
- ◇ I was in a men's group with five people for several years that met at 6:00 in the morning before we went to work.
- ◇ I was in a group of 2 that met for a year at 6:00 a.m.
- ◇ My wife and I met with a group of young singles for a year.
- ◇ My wife and I met with 4 college students every week for 4 years.
- ◇ I met with 6 men online for a year in a Zoom meeting.