

SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

1. You can have small groups at church, in a home or other places like a restaurant or office. They probably work best in a home, but the church might be better if childcare is needed.
2. Small groups are usually more flexible and meet longer than a Sunday School class – usually 1 ½ hours.
3. Small groups can include food or a meal before or after, but they don't have to. Sometimes just coffee or cookies is enough or nothing at all.
4. Do not lecture. It should be a discussion based on what the group members read during the week.
 - They read one or several chapters of the Bible.
 - They read a chapter from a book about ministry or leadership.
 - They filled out a chapter from a workbook where they fill in the blanks.
 - You can have specific discussion questions, or they can be generic that apply to any chapter.
 - Some churches just meet together and ask a few questions about the sermon from last Sunday but I don't recommend this. The greatest personal growth will come from a person reading, thinking about, applying and discussing something they studied, not just listening to a sermon.
5. Usually small groups have between three and eight people. This keeps it small enough to be personal and allows everyone to talk and answer every question.
6. Don't assign people to a small group. Let the leader invite people and let them choose whether they want to be in the group or not.
7. Set a limit on the length of weeks a small group will meet – a semester or a year is usual. At the end of the semester, people can choose to exit if they don't want to continue meeting with the group.
8. When you meet, let every person share a prayer request and be prayed for.
9. Homework is really important if you want the group members to grow spiritually. They learn best when they spend time on their own reading and thinking.
10. Scripture memory isn't a bad idea. One verse a week isn't unreasonable. There really isn't anywhere else in the church where this would be done, so go for it.
11. Spread out the leadership. Let several people share the leadership every time you meet.
 - One leads the prayer request time and prays.
 - One asks people to share what stood out to them when they read the Bible chapter.
 - One can ask and facilitate question and answer about specific topics.
 - One could "story" a Bible chapter and tell it in their own words.
 - One could read the verses out loud that you will be discussing.
12. Care for one another. If someone in your group needs help – help them.
13. Multiply. Your group can continue meeting for one year or many years, but you should train someone every year to be able to start a new group. That person, or couple, will leave and invite new people to join their new group.