

SMALL GROUP COVENANT (LEADER GUIDE)



Date: _____

Leaders: _____

Phone: _____

Hosts: _____

Phone: _____

Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

SMALL GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Small Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

- **SHARE**
Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions". But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.
- **STUDY**
Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.*
- **SUPPORT**
Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.
- **SERVE**
Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29). *Tangents—they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*
2. Accept one another (Romans 15:7). *We will have different preferences.*
3. Take care of one another (John 13:34). *When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals etc.*
4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once. Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix—unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we

can't question what is said or what someone is doing.

Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator—be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.

Be careful of gossip prayers. For example “we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ...”

No put-downs.

What is said here, stays here—of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.

5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b). Please give us a call if you can't make it to Small Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.

GUIDELINES & COVENANT

1. Dates

We'll meet on _____ nights for ____ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on _____.

2. Time

We'll arrive between ____ & ____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately ____ minutes in singing (optional), ____ minutes in study/discussion, ____ and minutes in prayer/sharing.

3. Children

Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group.

4. Study

Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. **Not to answer every question.**

5. Prayer

Praying for one another. **You'll go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember, being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: “It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray.” Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.**

6. Homework & Attendance

Joining a Small Group requires a commitment to attend each week and do the homework ahead of time. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more! **This commitment is the key to a healthy group.**

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call _____. **Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)**

Make sure that everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)

Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.

7. Desserts—Have everyone sign up for a night to do dessert.

8. Social & Service Project(s)—Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social by mid-quarter.

9. Other—Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the third week of the quarter.

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.

(To be decided by each person on or before the third week.)