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# Passion for Small Groups

## A PASSION FOR SMALL GROUPS

### ❖ Kinds of Small Groups in your church?

- What kind of small groups meet at your church?
- How many meet every month?
- What are the goals of the groups?

### ❖ The question often is “How and where do we start a small group?”

The passages from the bible printed below have some key points for us to consider. Underline some of the key lessons from the bible passages. (*this is a good technique to use in bible studies- provide the text on paper for all to underline and write their own notes.*)

#### Exodus 4:10-12

*Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since You have spoken to Your servant; for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." The LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say."*

#### Jeremiah 1:9

*Then the LORD stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth."*

#### Matthew 4:19

*And He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

#### 2 Tim 1 v7

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*

#### Phil 4v 13

*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

#### Philippians 4:19

*And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*

#### 1 Peter 3:15

*but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;*

#### James 1:23-25

*For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

- ❖ From the texts listed above we can see that it is God's power and equipping that empowers us for the small group ministry. We are not leading a group or setting up a group alone. What a comforting thought.
- ❖ The small group is not a panacea – (*or fix all solution*). No effort of man can bring the church to greater faithfulness in meeting the needs and problems of its day except as the Holy Spirit directs and infills. But the small group is an essential component of the church's structure and life. In order for men to be moved by the Holy Spirit there must be an openness towards God and towards others, an openness which best develops in a context of the supporting love and fellowship of other sincere seekers after God.  
The Problem of Wineskins  
Church Structure in a Technological Age  
by Howard Snyder

## From passion into action

Groups come into being when the hunger, faith and determination of concerned persons are matched with the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

## How Do I Get Started ?

*Read Chapter 7 —*

*Getting Started*

*From John Mallison's book*

*Growing Christians in Small Groups.*

**Should we start big? Have the pastor involved. Use a sermon series with a video (Philip Yancey) and have the whole congregation involved in small groups. This is harder to organise**

This document looks at starting small and growing more groups from this.



*How can I help others catch the vision?*

- ◆ *Check your motives?*
- ◆ *Decide what kind of small group*
- ◆ *Listen for expressed needs*
- ◆ *Take the initiative*
- ◆ *Test interest by giving a book to a select group of people*
- ◆ *Share a small group experience together— a supper/ at home dinner/ take-away. Then share your ideas. Keep it as low key as possible.*

**Underlining the scripture from John 14.** – find references to God being with us and providing for us by sending the Holy Spirit

“Don’t be troubled. You trust God, now trust in me. 14:2 There are many rooms in my Father’s home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. If this were not so, I would tell you plainly. 14:3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 14:4 And you know where I am going and how to get there.”

14:5 “No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We haven’t any idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

14:6 Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. 14:7 If you had known who I am, then you would have known who my Father is.\* From now on you know him and have seen him!”

14:8 Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.”

14:9 Jesus replied, “Philip, don’t you even yet know who I am, even after all the time I have been with you? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking to see him?”

14:10 Don’t you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I say are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. 14:11 Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of what you have seen me do.

14:12 “The truth is, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. 14:13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, because the work of the Son brings glory to the Father.

14:14 Yes, ask anything in my name, and I will do it!

*Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit*

14:15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor,\* who will never leave you. 14:17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world at large cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you do, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 14:18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. 14:19 In just a little while the world will not see me again, but you will. For I will live again, and you will, too. 14:20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 14:21 Those who obey my commandments are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them, and I will love them. And I will reveal myself to each one of them.”

14:22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

14:23 Jesus replied, “All those who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them.

14:24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not do what I say. And remember, my words are not my own. This message is from the Father who sent me. 14:25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 14:26 But when the Father sends the Counsellor as my representative—and by the Counsellor I mean the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I myself have told you.

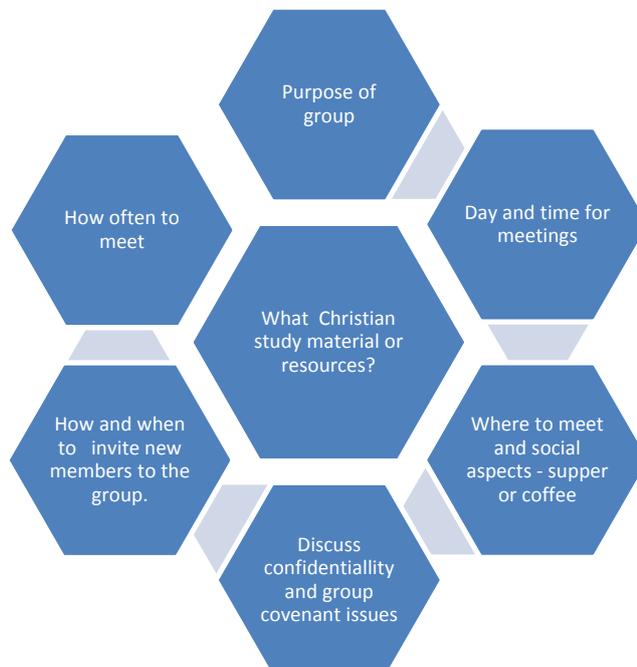


## Advantages of Small Group Structure

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- It is flexible
- It is mobile
- It is inclusive
- It is personal
- It can grow by division
- It can be an effective means of evangelism
- It requires a minimum of professional leadership
- It is adaptable to the institutional church

### Discussion at the first gathering



## SPENDING TIME LISTENING TO GOD AND PRAYING AS A GROUP AND INDIVIDUALS

How well do we listen? We need to develop the skill of listening to God and also to listen to others around us.

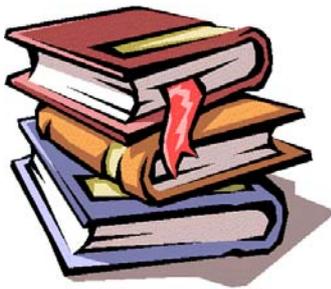


Learning the art of listening is very important. When love motivates our listening there is a commitment not only to grasp what is being communicated but to also to discover the person behind the words.

It is often helpful to check to see if we have heard what the person really wanted to communicate by paraphrasing what was said and checking this is so.

One who cannot listen long and patiently to others will often be talking beside the point and not really be communicating effectively. Unfortunately they will be quite unaware of this.

### Some Helpful Resources when leading a small group



#### Growing Christians in Small Groups

by John Mallison

*Now available for free download on line or order from a second hand book suppliers. Look up John Mallison on line and you will find other helpful resources under his authorship. I have used this book and highly recommend this as a very good tool to getting going. The book has helpful ideas on prayer and also innovative ways of leading studies.*

#### Leading Better Bible Studies

Essential Skills for Effective Small Groups

By Karen Morris and Rod Morris

Aquila Press

*This is another very good resource written by Australian authors*

#### Growth Groups

Leader's Manual by Colin Marshall

Matthias Media

#### Tyndale Handbook of Bible Charts and Maps

Reference Library

CD included

I use this regularly. Charts and maps can be printed off the CD. The bible is ready for printing. Each book of the bible has a summary and central themes discussed. A great resource.