

# **Effective Sharing and Support**

The foundational element for any successful growth group is that the group members develop love for one another and friendship with each other. Growth groups which do not have a foundation of caring friendship will be limited in their ability to support each other and serve together. Several factors are important in developing this foundation

## **Develop and talk about foundational commitments and ground rules**

Groups need to be safe places ruled by honesty, respect and love. Talk about these fundamental needs. As a leader continues to name these values as you see them displayed in the group.

Above all model positive behavior as a leader

## **There is no substitute for time together**

All friendships are developed over time. Groups need to meet regularly and find ways to interact socially. It is recommended that groups meet 3 times a month to create a sense of consistency.

Plan service and social events at various times during the year. As a suggested minimum, look for two planned social events and one service project.

## **Practical help**

When group members need help the group needs to rise to the occasion. Look to support each other during significant events such as death in the family, new babies, illnesses and moves.

## **Model personal connection:**

Leaders must take the initiative to model personal connection by being willing to share feelings, be open to authentic accountability and ask for personal prayer requests. If the leaders will not go beyond the surface, the group will not go beyond the surface.

## **Notice absences**

If someone does not attend a group meeting or a Sunday service and you do not know why, be sure to follow up with them the next day.

## **Create time for sharing and support.**

At some time during a group meeting, members should be encouraged to talk about their lives. Sometimes this will come about through the application study questions, but more often members will want to report on challenges and celebrations they are facing in life.

Leaders can use specific invitational questions to call forth sharing. At times it may be appropriate to ask a specific person a follow up question about something they have shared at a previous meeting. At other times a general question to the whole group may be appropriate.

Sample questions could be

- Does anybody have anything they would like to share with the group
- What are your highs and lows this week
- Does anybody have a challenge or celebration this week?
- Does anybody have a prayer request?

## **Make it personal**

Every group member needs to make an effort to be personal with the group. It takes time to build trust, but do not hold back forever. Group members should be encouraged to share about their lives and prayer concerns. It is fine to share the needs of others in your life, especially close friends and family members.

Accept that sharing prayer requests is an important way to share life, but be sure to reserve enough time to pray.

If you share a prayer request that is not personal, do not take too much time to explain details. It is good to pray for sick friends of friends, but do not take too much time relaying the request.

## **Guide Appropriate Feedback:**

When a person shares sensitive feelings or needs it is sometimes better to not offer advice and feedback. On the other hand, the insights of the group can be helpful.

It is best to ask permission to share advice “Can I share with you something I have found helpful?”

Present advice as a question rather than a command “Have you considered trying ....”

Give people the right to say “I’m not really looking for advice, but I wanted to share with you that....”