

Biblical basis for small groups

Many small groups are carrying out portions of the five scriptural small group principles even though they may not be consciously aware of it. In order to ensure we are building on a biblical foundation, we have selected five biblical principles that form the basis of the small group ministry. We do not expect every small group to incorporate these principles in every meeting but that the small group strives to incorporate these principles to some degree throughout the lifetime of the group. We want each participant to consciously be aware of how their small group can grow in areas that may not yet have been incorporated. It is beneficial to discuss these principles in your small group to see how you are doing and where you can improve.

Discipleship

Matt 28:20 “**Teaching** them to **obey** all things whatsoever I have commanded you”

Acts 2:42 – “And they **continuing stedfastly in the apostles doctrine...**”

- Primary aim of a Christian is to “be conformed to the image of God’s son”. The end goal of discipleship is to become like the master. We want to model His character and be an ambassador to his kingdom. (Rom 8:29, 2 Cor 5:20)
- Two important parts to discipleship
 - Learning the theory: Bible study to become more familiar with what Jesus commanded and the apostles doctrine.
 - Living it out in practice: Helping each other live out these teachings in a practical way and allowing others see how we live it out so they are able to follow us. “Brethren be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example” Phil 3:17

Fellowship

Acts 2:42 “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine **and fellowship**, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Biblical fellowship is comprised of these common components

- Participation and communication around the common bond we have in Christ.
- True fellowship dives below the surface image that we present to the world and allows us to connect heart to heart with others and with God
- Encouraging one another in our walk with the Lord (Heb 10:25)
- Bearing one another’s burdens. When one of the group is hurting and going through a difficult time the others are there to encourage and walk with that person sharing their burden. (Gal 6:2)
- Tremendous strength in walking life’s road together. “Two are better than one... for if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow” Ecl 4:9-12

Ministering

Ephesians 4:11-13 “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the

body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:"

- Use the unique gifts that God has given to each one to edify and build each other up.
- Each member in the group is called to minister (Eph 4:16)
- Meet physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the group members. Also minister together as a group in the community, at church, visitation and other group activities that demonstrate the role of caring about each individual (Acts 2:45, Gal 6:10)

Worship

John 4:23 "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

- We worship God because he is worth the respect and reverence we offer. This is done when we worship God in spirit and in truth. It is primarily an inward state and reflection of our heart of who God is and our relationship with him. It is not a momentary action that we do from time to time, but an attitude and lifestyle demonstrating that God has a lot of worth in our lives.
- Worship contains many elements in a small group
 - Praying together (Acts 2:42). Includes praise and thanksgiving to God, intercession on behalf of other people's needs, confession of our faults one to another, and our recognition of dependence on Him (Jam 5:16, Phil 4:7-8)
 - Demonstrate we love God by committing to obey his commandments. Jesus said "If ye love me keep my commandments"
 - Acknowledge God's presence in our lives and express our appreciation by sharing the experiences we have had with Him to others
 - Singing. While singing is often difficult in a small group, sometimes listening to a song and meditating on it is an equally effective way

Evangelism

Luke 24:47 "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"

- The disciples were called to start sharing the gospel in Jerusalem and so we to should begin in our city
- Jesus called us to be fishers of men (Matt 4:19) He didn't call us as lone rangers with a fishing rod and reel but as a team working a net together.
- The world we live in is strong in instant communication but weak in deep relationships. A small group is a great way to develop deep relationships especially to those who have never experienced this blessing.
- Evangelism in the context of a friendship relationship is one of the most effective ways to share the gospel