

Growth Groups - A Simple Guide

Motto: **Love one another – Go and make disciples**

A Growth Group is two or three people who meet regularly (usually once or twice a week) to be disciplined by Jesus. Only one of the members needs to be a Christian, the others may be anyone who is curious about Jesus.

Two Commands

Growth Groups are the most effective way of obeying Jesus' two great commands:

"Love one another" (John 13:34) and

"Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

Two Promises

Growth Groups depend on two promises Jesus made. This means that as we read scripture together we can trust the Holy Spirit to lead us to Jesus:

"Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20) and

"The Spirit of truth will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:13)

Two Warnings

Going to church does not mean we are disciples. We can even do bible study and still not be disciples. We must be obedient to Jesus and come to know Jesus Himself, not just know the scriptures:

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 7:21)

"You study the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life ... yet you refuse to come to me to have life." (John 5:39-40)

Two Relationships

We are called into two types of relationship. Firstly our relationship with the Father; which is through knowing Jesus with the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why we must learn to listen to Jesus and not just study the Bible.

Secondly we are called to love one another. So we must learn to listen to one another in the Growth Group, and pray for one another, and love one another.

Four Questions

When the Growth Group meets, you start by reading aloud the passage you have chosen. Each person should then repeat the passage in their own words to make sure everyone understands what they have read. Then each person should share in discussing these four questions:

1. What does this tell us about people's character or nature?
2. What does this tell us about Jesus or God?
3. What does Jesus want to say to me personally?
4. Who does Jesus want me to share this message with?

People often need help to learn how to answer the first two questions. They are NOT about what the passage is saying to us as Christians (that is the third question). The first question is to help us think about the people Jesus wants us to share the Good News with. What are they like? What are their needs or fears? How are they deceived by Satan? Most passages tell us something about what people are like.

The second question is to help us think about God's nature; His love, holiness, glory, mercy etc. Most passages tell us something about God.

The third and fourth question should be personal; not "What does this passage tell people they should do?" but "What specific thing in my life right now is Jesus speaking to me about?" and "Which specific friend or neighbour does Jesus want me to speak to about this passage?"

Then take turns to pray for each one in the group, and for your outreach.

Choosing a Passage

Your Pastor may recommend some particular passages for you to read to help you get started with your Growth Group. You should start with short passages or even single verses. Once you are used to studying the scriptures in your Growth Group we recommend you work your way through Luke's Gospel and then the other Gospels before moving on to the rest of the bible.

Go at the pace that suits your group. Do not wear people out with difficult passages or long meetings. You do not need to understand everything, just leave out passages you find difficult.

Starting New Groups

Family groups are a great way to start. You might start meeting as a whole family, but should soon divide into threes (plus any small children). You can invite someone else to see how your group works, or offer to help them start their own group, and meet with them for a few weeks to get them started.