

GrowthGroup Group Chat Etiquette

We're in a special age in which communication among our groups can happen at any time during the week—largely due to group chats! However, what is a blessing to many can also feel like a burden or hinderance to real ministry.

Some love group chats as a way to share information, prayer requests, or other information that provides light and benefit throughout the week. Others compare being in a group that to being “held captive.” The last thing we want is for our GrowthGroups to feel like the latter in any way.

Because of this, we've prayed through the content in this guide and established some guidelines for making the most of your group chat. Feel free to use any and all of this content as you shepherd the members in your group towards edifying communication.

1. Leaders Set The Tone

“Shepherd God’s flock among you, not overseeing out of compulsion but willingly, as God would have you, not out of greed for money but eagerly; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

1 Peter 5:2-3

“But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin’s deception.”

Hebrews 3:13

As with in-person gatherings, leaders go first in group chats. You set the temperature for how the group communicates. Be present, encouraging, and responsive. Even brief acknowledgments communicate care and help members feel seen—especially when vulnerability is involved. While you don't need to respond to everything immediately, a consistent rhythm of acknowledgment (within a reasonable window) builds trust and momentum.

Hint: Set a reminder in your phone to encourage your group, individual members, or others at a certain time each week. This will keep some momentum even during those busy weeks.

Hint: While you don't need to create an uprising of notifications (See guideline 5), even just a thumbs up or a heart can be beneficial for communicating that their

message was seen and acknowledged. Caution on iMessage or SMS group chats though, because everyone gets notified when someone's message is liked!

Hint: Crossover staff have adopted a 24-hour rule for texts. This is a helpful guideline in thinking about how frequently messages are responded to. A way to implement this is to set a time once a day to look at important chats or text threads and make sure messages are at least acknowledged, even if a full response isn't possible in the moment.

2. Remember the Purpose of the Group

"Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil."

Ephesians 5:15-16

"What then, brothers and sisters? Whenever you come together, each one has a hymn, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Everything is to be done for building up."

1 Corinthians 14:26

"Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts."

Colossians 3:16

Your group's purpose should be reflected through your group chats as well. Any specific or unique marks of your group can and should mirror themselves in your chats. Diversion from this purpose can happen, but make sure it's not a frequent happening—as this can quickly lead to group chat fatigue.

3. Recognize Misunderstandings are Possible

"The one who gives an answer before he listens—this is foolishness and disgrace for him."

Proverbs 18:13

Texting is a disadvantaged method of communication, so make sure you're aware of the potential misunderstandings that could occur. Remember, you're in the driver's seat for the group chat, if you feel misunderstandings may be popping up, you're responsible to help with resolution if it can't be found.

4. Respect Capacity, Time, and Boundaries

“Seldom set foot in your neighbor’s house; otherwise, he’ll get sick of you and hate you.”

Proverbs 25:17

“When there are many words, sin is unavoidable, but the one who controls his lips is prudent.”

Proverbs 10:19

“My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.”

James 1:19

Be mindful of how often messages are sent and when they’re sent. High-volume messaging or late-night notifications can quickly lead to fatigue or frustration for those not actively participating. If conversations spike, leaders may need to help slow the pace. When the chat becomes overwhelming, muting can be a temporary and appropriate tool—but should be used intentionally and undone when things settle.

Hint: Many messaging services now have a “Schedule Send” or “Send Later” option. If you can use those, use them!

5. Shepherd Wisely: Offline and Private When Needed

“If your brother sins against you, go tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

Matthew 18:15

“The wounds of a friend are trustworthy,”

Proverbs 27:6a

“Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.”

Colossians 4:6

“A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath.”

Proverbs 15:1

Remember that group chats always have an audience. Conversations better suited for a few people—or situations requiring correction—should move to private or offline communication. Shepherd privately, with grace, and assume the best. At the same time, when members encourage others or share vulnerably, acknowledge and celebrate that publicly so the group sees what is valued and repeated.

6. Above All, GRACE.

We are imperfect people trying to live life for a perfect Heavenly Father. There won't be perfection in your groups, much less so in your group chats. Maintain and encourage a culture of grace as we all are learning to navigate life together in the context of authentic community.