

Troubleshooting A Small Group

- **There is a person in your group who answers every question.**

What will you do to keep this person from dominating every discussion & preempting others from sharing?

As group leader, one of your roles is to facilitate each discussion to ensure participation from all small group members. Helpful tips are:

1. State at the beginning of each meeting that your goal is to hear from all members of the group. This sets the clear expectation.
2. Once a person answers a question, do not call on them again first for at least one question. You may say, "We have heard from [dominant member's name], so I would like to hear from others." Actively seek out other group members for their answers.
3. Silence can be your friend. Allow pauses once a question is asked for at least one minute. (Which will seem very long!) This allows other members to contribute.

- **You have one person who never participates in the group discussion. What are some ideas for drawing this person into the discussion?**

1. Call this small group member mid-week for an overall update. Share in your open-ended discussion that you value their contribution and ask what issues prevent them from sharing. Search for their reasons and solve for these issues shared.
2. Assure this member that you may call on them in the future for their contribution and that short answers are perfectly acceptable!

- **One member of the group seems to always have needs (e.g. employment problems, health problems, relational problems). How can you keep this person from draining the group of its energy and resources?**

The best way to manage this member after this initial sharing of their specific need is by visiting with them prior to the meeting alone and obtaining from them their specific needs. Assure them you will share this need with the small group but also indicate every member of the group has equal access. When you sharing their need, you can keep this need in proportion to other needs of the group.

• During one meeting, one group member advocates an unscriptural position. What can you do to correct the error without embarrassing the person?

1. Call on other members for their input. Make an effort to find a more biblical answer to the question.
2. Ask the members who shared this unscriptural position to share the Bible verse which supports their answer. Most likely, they either misrepresented a verse or do not have a verse. All answers should be biblically based. Make an effort to shine light on a more correct answer which is biblically based. Do it in a gentle manner.

• You have one group member who tends to take the conversation to current events and offers commentary with a political slant. How do you prevent this from sidetracking and polarizing your group?

One of the ground rules you should implement is that current events and political beliefs are best kept outside the group discussions. Every effort should be made to maximize the short time of the meeting (90 minutes or so) to prayer requests and study questions! They are free to share their beliefs other times during the week in personal discussions.

• You notice that your group is imbalanced in regard to truth, accountability and relationships. What would you do to strengthen your group for growth in truth? In accountability? In relationships?

1. No small group is perfect! As a small group leader, you should see growth in your group in these areas over time.
2. Identify the weaknesses of the small group and look for ways to integrate scripture each week which focuses on this special area from a biblical perspective. Allow Scripture and the Holy Spirit to work on these areas in the hearts of your people.
3. Pray daily for these areas in the lives of your group. Your prayers can make a difference.