



Group Meeting Rhythms & Responses to Common Concerns

1. When should our Community Group meet?

- The decision on when your group meets is ultimately up to YOU. You may poll the potential group members to discern the best day & time to gather, however, You should schedule a meeting day & time that will consistently work for you & your family.
- Groups are expected to meet at least 2 times monthly. Anything less than this makes it very difficult to deepen relationships & create traction in spiritual growth.

2. All NHB Community Groups have a profile on our database including a roster, group description, picture of leaders, meeting time & day. You can view your group profile at nhbentonville.com/community

- Update your group profile 1x annually = Send a 2-3 sentence description of your Community Group to the Community Pastor (Ages & Stages of group members, Values & other unique aspects of your group).

3. Whether we like to admit it or not, VISION LEAKS! Communicate with your Community Shepherd (Monthly) & Community Group Members (Weekly or Bi-Weekly) to insure the vision for Health, Growth & Multiplication in Community isn't being lost over time.

Common Concerns for Community Group Leaders

1. How do I address difficult Cultural Topics?

Examples in this category might include - Same Sex marriage, Political Convictions or Conflicts, Divorce, Abortion, Resentment between different generations, Etc...

- **Pray** - Listen to God for Wisdom & His heart for the person asking the question. Give yourself permission to pray before ever 'jumping in' on a hot cultural topic.
- **Ask clarifying questions** regarding the motivation & mindset of the person(s) asking to begin with.
- **Prioritize what the Bible says over your personal stories or convictions.** The Spirit of God & Scriptures are what transform our minds & will. However, You are meant to be honest & bring your true self to the conversation. You may not be an expert (probably aren't) but God can use your story, perspective, experiences & faith to positively impact our group members.
- You may feel led to bring up or stir up a meaningful discussion among your Community Group. Jesus certainly engaged controversial topics but he always did so with these priorities:
 - o First - His motive was always to invite or edify the hearer. He came to win souls not win arguments (John 3:16-18)
 - o Second - Jesus masterfully dug deeper by asking questions & getting to the heart (motivation / idols) of His audience (John 4:1-42 / Matthew 19:16-22 / Matthew 16:13-20).
 - Often the question being asked is not really the ultimate question or concern of your group member. They may be asking about same sex marriage but really need to know about the goodness of God, His love & mercy, rather than just about His purpose / plan for those with same sex attraction or another related topic. Ask the person to clarify exactly what they are asking as you also listen for God to inform your hearing / answer.

2. How do I identify the right tools for 'Gospel Growth' among my group members?

Examples in this category might include - Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Marriage &/or Family, Spiritual Disciplines, Grief / Loss, Evangelism, Etc...

- **Pray** - Listen to God for Wisdom & His heart for the person(s) you are Discipline. To love & lead someone you must speak as much to God about them (intercession) as you speak to them about God.
- **Discern & Discover** - Possible tools for Discipleship & Growth together. Give yourself freedom to ask the member(s) of your group about authors, books, practices & other resources which have helped them in the past - You are not hostage to their past or preferences but you also don't want to be ignorant of them.
- **Widen the Circle** by including your Community Shepherd, the Discipleship Pastor or other church leaders for resources they would recommend related to the topic/theme you are wanting to address.
- **Here is a Guiding RULE for choosing a resource / tool for Gospel Growth:**

Scripture is always primary & other books or sources are secondary (supplemental) for Gospel Growth.

Thoroughly consider what books or passages of scripture may directly address the theme or topic your group member(s) are needing to grow in.

Of course, you can always refer to the resources outlined in the Group Development Pathway listed above. These are recommended to move group members from Identity & Conviction (Health) all the way to Application & Repeatable Disciplines (Multiplication)

What Should We Do with our Kids?

Below are some ideas on how to handle the child-care during group meetings. There are advantages and disadvantages to each suggestion. Do what works for your group.

Note on paying for child-care—often there will be people with plenty of money in the same group with those who are financially stressed. There may also be people with children in the same group as people without children. Don't worry about everyone paying the same thing. Those with more can give more. Childless members may want to contribute to child-care because it's a blessing to the group.

1. Allow the children to stay in the same room as the meeting.

Advantage--you don't have to think about child-care. It incorporates children into community. Parents might provide a "quiet bag," a bag of coloring books, games, and toys that promote quiet play during the group meeting.

Disadvantage—This approach works only if there are very few children *and* they are quiet natured. Also, the presence of children may inhibit adult conversation—confession of sins, discussion of marriage problems, etc.

2. Hire in-house child-care.

Advantage—All group members are able to be in the group and participate in discussion and prayer. Parents are easily available if needed.

Disadvantage—Extra administrative work for whoever is responsible for arranging child care. Sometimes it's difficult to find reliable and skilled help. Some parents are not able to contribute financially.

3. Hire remote-location child care for the whole group

Advantage—No distractions during group meeting. Drop off and pickup always done in the same place. (Preferably a place close to where the group meets, such as the home of one of the group members).

Disadvantage—May be difficult to find a place close by. Group will not be as able to move meeting locations. Hosting responsibilities will not be shared. Group will need to be more attentive to having a definite stop time.

4. Each family arranges their own child care.

Advantage—child care is no longer a group problem. No extra administrative work for anyone. No distractions during group meetings.

Disadvantage—Some parents won't do it--they feel it's important to have their kids with them. Could have a negative effect on group attendance--parents may not attend group if they have a problem finding child care. Could increase drop-outs.

5. Four week rotation.

Week 1—kids and adults all together. Eat, sing, tell a Bible story, pray and hang out.

Week 2—men & women meet separately, dads watch kids.

Week 3— Everyone arranges their own child care and have a grown up night.

Week 4—men and women meet separately, moms watch kids.

Advantages—children are included in community. Everyone has an opportunity to bring up things they would normally not bring up in a mixed group or a group with kids. Diversity keeps it interesting.

Disadvantages—the routine is always changing. Someone would need to be the administrator/communicator about what's coming up.