

“Get Connected” Tips for Healthy Small Group Meetings

- Begin and end on time—Begin promptly on time. End at the agreed upon time.
- Trust the “Get Connected” process—Elements of balanced discipleship and healthy group life are included in the structure. Use it!
- Make sure everyone has an Order of Meeting, Bible, and Bible study—Participation and involvement is the goal. Give group members the tools they need to participate easily.
- Encourage everyone’s participation—Remember the basic ground rule: Everybody participates and no one dominates! Remind people of this by saying it aloud together. Rotate reading questions and being the first to answer them.
- Break into groups of three or four during the “explore it” and “get it” sections of the study and during the prayer time—Everyone gets to participate and you maximize discussion and prayer.
- Keep the discussion moving--Don’t get bogged down on one question. Many times your answers to the next question will clarify the previous question.
- Use the following guidelines of interpretation to help the group:
 - * ***Trust that God is present.*** Depend upon the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ within the group.
 - * ***Determine the background of the text.*** Who wrote this passage? To Whom? When? Why? What kind of literature is this?
 - * ***Explore the grammar of the text.*** What do the words mean? What does the syntax tell us?
 - * ***Understand the historical context of the text.*** How was this passage understood by its first readers/hearers? What historical allusions or cultural conventions within the text and/or context are important to its meaning?
 - * ***Identify intended theological truth.*** About God? About ourselves? About sin and salvation? About the church and its ministry? About history and the end times? About other doctrines?
 - * ***Remember that the goal is obedience.*** How can I put into practice the eternal scriptural principle through my everyday living?
- When questions arise regarding interpretation write down the question and consult reputable study notes and commentaries—AFTER the group meeting. Look at our “Core Commitments” and/or our Faith Statement and see if they provide a framework of understanding. When necessary submit your question to a respected church leader (e.g. pastor, deacon, etc.) and get their help.
- Keep prayer requests “in the group.” Share personal prayer requests--requests of the group participants--rather than requests for people not in the group unless your requests are a part of your SERVICE commitment of evangelism and missions.