

Date

Notes:

PREPARATION: Your first meeting is very important. It sets the mood for future meetings. As the servant-leader, you need to show the quiet confidence of having a plan to serve the other members. The following suggestions will help you approach your first meeting with confidence. This will help even if you've never conducted a group meeting before:

1. Pray daily that God will draw the people He wants to your group. Pray for a "unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." (Ephesians 4:3)
2. Personally invite people to your home group and show concern for them as individuals. *Group life is built on relationships!*
3. One way to start a home group is to invite people to your home for a social gathering. Tell them about your interest in starting a cell.
4. Try to provide a pleasant comfortable room and a friendly atmosphere free of distractions (pets, radio, TV). Provide good lighting, ventilation, and temperature.
5. If children will be present be sure their needs are met. (You will receive detailed instructions for children later.)
6. Remind everyone of the first meeting a few days in advance. Ask them to bring a Bible, pen or pencil, and paper.
7. Make sure everyone gets to know everyone else as they arrive. You, as the leader, should call them by their names. This will help them remember each others' names.
8. Set an example. Always start the meetings on time! "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed." Proverbs 16:3

PURPOSES:

1. Have everyone attending the meeting get to know everyone else.
2. Share your vision for the group with the others.

A group of people who learn to study the Bible and pray together as they build relationships with each other and grow closer to each other.

3. Establish a biblical basis for the group.

DIGGING DEEPER:

Matthew 9:10-12, Luke 5:17-26, Acts 10:24-48, Rom. 16:4-5 Galatians 6:9-10, I Peter 2:4-5

FLEXIBLE CELL GROUPS – WHAT IS IT AND HOW CAN IT BE?

Some cell groups are more flexible than others. Some are already warmed up; others take more time to come together as a group. That doesn't mean you need to compare your cell group to others. God has given each one a special purpose and vision. Some cell groups focus directly on street evangelism, others focus on ministering to the homeless. Still others may quietly pursue a ministry of prayer and healing. Each cell group, with its particular mission, is important.

Regardless of its focus, it helps to hear what other groups are doing. Knowing what others are doing can keep a cell group flexible and fresh. This is not done to compare, but to glean new ideas and keep from getting stagnant. Your cell meetings should be very flexible. *That doesn't mean a cell leader should not plan.* Being creative does not mean you skip planning and preparation. You need to have a plan every time the cell gathers. However, you should also be led by the Holy Spirit. Be ready for a *different* plan of action at a moment's notice. Since cell groups are small, it is important they are not run like a large group meeting. You are dealing one-on-one with individuals. With smaller groups of people, it's easier to be flexible.

HOW DO WE START CELL MEETINGS ON TIME AND END THEM ON TIME?

If your cell meets in the evening, starting on time is important. You will probably have small children or school-age children that need to get to bed early. Start at the agreed time, whether or not everyone is present. Soon people will understand that they cannot depend on a time-cushion! Don't try to accomplish too many things in one cell meeting. Write up a list of realistic goals and time-frames. Try to stick to the most important ones. Here is the suggested plan for the group to use. However, as we mentioned above, don't be afraid to be flexible.

OPENING PRAYER/WORSHIP (10 minutes)

(There are a lot of Christian praise and worship songs that can be found on the Web or in Christian music stores. Pick up those that you think will be appropriate for this first meeting.)

"Dear Lord: You've said in Your Word that where two or three gather in the name of Your Son, He will be present. We recognize His presence now, and confess Him as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Everything said or done at this meeting acknowledges the lordship of Jesus.

*Lord, as we meet for the first time we ask for a special clarity as we communicate with each other and hear You speak to **each** of us. We rebuke and bind any spirit of confusion because we know You are not the author of confusion. May Your love, joy and **peace** prevail. _____*

(Special prayer requests and/or thanksgivings may be added here.) In Jesus' name, Amen."

ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPECIAL OFFERINGS (5 minutes)

GETTING STARTED (20 minutes)

Have home group members share about themselves before you start the Bible study. You will need to keep this introduction *time* brief. Set an example as you introduce yourself. Be informal, but not too personal in the beginning. We do not want anyone to feel threatened by this activity. Sharing names, addresses, and occupations may be enough for this first meeting. If your group is small and you feel led by the Spirit, you might suggest sharing about getting to know Jesus and/or why they are here.

(CAUTION: Especially this first meeting, you must be **very** careful in using your time!)

HEARING THE WORD (10 minutes)

Briefly share your vision for the group:

"A home group is made up of people who learn to study the Bible and pray together. By doing this they build relationships with each other, growing closer to each other and to God."

(Explain that small groups were an important principle taught in the New Testament.)

Jesus began to form His small group (the twelve disciples) early in His earthly ministry:

"As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed Him." Mark 1:16-20

Small groups were important to the growth of the early church from the beginning:

"Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:46-47

"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ." Acts 5:42

Apostle Paul used house as a symbol for the church frequently:

"Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." Ephesians 2:19-22

DOING THE WORD (10 minutes)

Ask group members what they might do during the next week to build a sense of family within the group. You may need to help with some suggestions:

1. Phone someone in the group just to chat.
2. Pray for someone's special need.
3. Tell somebody you enjoyed their company.
4. Share an area of concern with a group member.

SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS/ANSWERS (5 minutes)

GROUP PRAYER (15 minutes)