

GOSPEL COMMUNITY

GUIDELINES + BEST PRACTICES

1. General Best Practices

- Respect each other's time
 - Arrive on time and wrap up on time.
- Be considerate
 - remove distractions (ex. silence phones, etc.)
 - avoid interrupting others or having side-conversations during group time - save this for later.
- Be mindful:
 - Be inclusive and aware of who is in your group? Single / married / divorced. Don't make assumptions. Consider where people are at before you speak We aware of sensitive issues - if you don't know the group members well, keep the conversation very general until trust is built
 - Include everyone in the group - nobody should feel like an outsider in your group

2. Hosting & Hospitality

- If you are the host...
 - please ensure there is seating space for all participants,
 - Please ensure that the space is clean and tidy - remove distractions such as clutter, dirty dishes, laundry or pets.
- Please start and end on time.
 - If the host home and participants have agreed to spend extra time together afterwards - please ensure the 90 minutes of guided time is completed on time so that those who need to leave on time are able to do so.
 - If the host has not offered an extension beyond the 90 minutes, please don't overstay. If an extension is offered one week, do not assume that is the norm.
- Be welcoming and inclusive
- Create a weekly snack schedule.
 - Each group can decide the nature of the food they are bringing each week. Some weeks you may wish to do a potluck - if so, you'll need to start earlier in order to be done on time.
- Communicate plans clearly
 - Make sure everyone knows what is happening
 - Decide on a common communication channel for the group

3. Discussions

- Be respectful in the way you speak to each other and about others
 - No cross talking (i.e. One person talks at a time. Others listen respectfully and attentively)
 - No disunifying, dissentious talk, including gossip or slander
- Be inclusive, participate equally in conversations
 - Good rule of thumb for everyone - don't say more than 3 sentences in a row (it's not as easy as you think!)
 - Do your best to engage in the conversation, especially if you're someone who tends to disengage or stay quiet
 - Consider this: if there are 9 people in a group and we meet for 90 minutes - that means the total talk time per person is 10 minutes
- No "counseling"
- Keep things confidential
 - No sharing stories about other people - those are their stories - encourage people to share but don't share for them.
- No solicitation (financial or otherwise)

4. Prayer Times

- Pray in smaller groups of 2-3 people (more comfortable and effective)
- Prayer requests can be shared during the week in group chat; use the designated prayer time to pray, not share
- Use provided prayer prompts (and prayer initiatives)
- Stay on topic
- Pray in alignment with Scripture
- Pray for the church
- Pray for church leadership

5. Group Chat Etiquette (WhatsApp, etc.)

- Be sure to include everyone
- Avoid sub-chat groups, unless for triads/accountability groups
- This is for prayer requests and encouragement
- This is for questions about the GC, church and/or sermon related topics
- This is not for personal or ongoing conversations
- This is not for business networking or promotions
- This is not for controversial/political views, youtube videos, etc.

6. Common Challenges

- Have the courage to correct someone if they are off-base or theologically incorrect.
 - We don't want to be so accommodating that we allow people to say things which are false without clarifying +/- or correcting.
 - When left unaddressed this leads to confusion and disunity.
 - This is done in love for the purpose of peace and unity, not shame.
- As a participant and as a group, avoid...
 - Personal tangents
 - Theological tangents
 - Monopolizing the conversation

7. Using the Community Guide

- Follow Community Guide and stay on track - avoid tangents
- This guide should take you 90 minutes to go through. Leave 15 minutes at the start and finish for catching up

LOOKING FOR FURTHER RESOURCES?

For help with having hard conversations, tools for studying the Bible, and so much more you can always head over to wchurch.ca/gcresources. And if you still can't find what you're looking for, reach out to community@wchurch.ca.