

Book Discussions

Taken from Small Group Dynamics ezine article: "When You Discuss a Book Other than the Bible," October, 2007, by Terry Powell.

Small groups often discuss books by Christian authors, one or two chapters at a time. The next time your group chooses a book to read--and it doesn't come with a study guide or questions for group interaction--employ the following tips.

Questions To Stimulate Feedback

Pick several of the following questions to employ in each group session. Vary the questions from week to week.

- Summarize the point of this chapter in a couple of sentences.
- Share one sentence or excerpt that you underlined. Why is that statement significant to you?
- What did the author say that you disagree with, or at least question? Why?
- If you could ask the author to elaborate on one point or sentence, what would it be? Why?
- What words describe your reaction to this chapter? Why?
- What fresh, I-never-thought-of-that before insight did the chapter offer?
- From your personal experience, how can you illustrate a point from this chapter?
- How did what you read increase your appreciation for God the Father, Jesus Christ, or the Holy Spirit?
- How did God's Spirit speak a personal word to you as you read?
- What challenged or convicted you? Explain.
- What encouraged you as you read? Explain.
- What relationships, personal circumstances, or life experiences came to mind as you read? Why?
- If the truth of this chapter were applied, what effect would it have on our decisions? Relationships? Schedules?
- What could be the consequences of not heeding this chapter?

One other thought as you read the book and prepare for the group discussion, you may think of Scripture passages that correlate with the author's point but which aren't cited in the book. Have group members read these passages and ask questions similar to the following:

- How does this verse/passage relate to this week's book chapter?
- How does this Bible passage support or complement the author's point?
- Based on Paul's remark, would he agree or disagree with the author's point on page xx? Why or why not?

Remember to model the transparency that you want from your group during discussions. That may require you to share an answer to a question, then ask, "Who else?"