

## ***Give The Meeting A Break And Let Group Life Begin***

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### **IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOUR GROUP IS QUESTIONING ITS WORTH? IS IT HEALTHY FOR A SMALL GROUP TO TAKE A BREAK? HOW CAN WE BRING NEW LIFE INTO OUR SMALL GROUPS?**

Where on the priority list of our hearts do you think our small group meetings rank? Has the priority of your small group meetings fallen a little lower than usual? In today's world we are continually prioritizing our obligations to make more time for the things that matter most to us. A group that meets week after week, without the proper breaks, becomes just a routine. Periodically a group needs a break from the routine to make time to practice the community they have been working towards. Taking the time to relate to each other can be a rewarding experience.

We have chosen to be involved in small groups because it is more relevant to our modern day world, than a large corporate meeting is on its own. Through small groups we have the ideal of bringing our church life into a lifestyle. We practice this lifestyle in the intimacy of our own homes. We use our homes and our whole lives to connect to one another in a community focused on Christ. In this community we mentor and disciple each other into spiritual maturity. By taking a break from our meeting we can spend more time together exploring group life.

The time we spend in our meetings is meant to keep our relationships and our community centered on Christ. But as life together goes on meeting after meeting our small groups can easily get in a rut. A relationship rut will have no great priority in our hearts. By taking a break from the meetings, we can spend more time doing those vital activities that bring more life into our groups, make them more effective, and more worthwhile than they ever have been.

As a small group leader I have found four vital activities that we can do during our breaks to draw us closer and give us a deeper sense of purpose. First, take time to develop a deeper connection between the members of your group. Second, bring life to others by mentoring a new Christian. Third, come together as a group to serve someone. Fourth, bring your leaders together for a time to connect in fellowship. All four of these activities can be hard to achieve if they are only to be accomplished only within the meeting times. It is necessary to take the proper time away from the meetings to have ample time to accomplish these vital activities.

## **TAKING THE TIME FOR A DEEPER CONNECTION**

As time goes by, it's natural for each member to question if the group is an effective model of a biblical community. Are we truly a community or do we just meet? Are these meetings organic? When these issues are in question it is easy to see how a meeting could be seen as just another obligation that could be prioritized out of our schedule. Maybe it's time to take a break from the meeting to make some time to connect together in our relationships.

As your group takes a break from the meetings, plan some time together both one-on-one and as a group. View these off times not as a break from the group, but simply as a break from the meetings. Take this time to connect your group together, making your community a lifestyle. Hang out with each other and develop personal relationships. Go to the movies, the beach or to see a special speaker. In the summer time our group enjoys having barbecues and inviting new people to join us. Often these new people have already been in our group's prayers for some time. Developing these relationships connects us into each other's lives. This personal touch in our groups keeps it from being just another obligation.

## **BRINGING LIFE TO OTHERS**

Jesus said in Matthew 28:19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." One of the most exciting things a group can do together is to fulfill this commission and disciple a new believer. Activities such as these bring worth to a group because they know they are in the midst of a true biblical community. God's blessing is always with a group that will open their circle to mentor a new believer. Nothing is more rewarding than to see a new believer grow within your group. It gives us the chance to see how we have grown both individually and as a group. Small groups that experience this naturally grow closer as each member discovers the worth of their meeting together.

When you are taking a break from the meetings to live with one another, include a new believer in your activities. Include them in on the barbecue, the movie night, or whatever you happen to be doing. Take the time to get to know the new believer someone else has brought in on a personal basis as a "we accept you in our group" message. The new believer has probably been hearing about this small group for some time, but has been considering if they too have time for yet another meeting in their life. Show them it's not just another meeting, but that it's a community, a lifestyle that adds worth, and a sense of purpose to our lives.

## **SERVING SOMEONE TOGETHER**

If your group seems to lack a sense of purpose, serve someone who has a need. There is no better feeling than going out of your way to serve someone else's need. Is there someone in your group who has a need? Is there someone your group has been praying for that you could serve? Recently some of the members from our small group have reached out to help a fellow Christian in the hospital. They have given her prayer and support, helped her take care of her home, as well as some other needs. Helping this woman has not only drawn us closer together but has also encouraged her in the value of Christian community. Many hands are better than one, and that goes for hearts as well. Take a break from the meetings to come together to serve someone if a need arises. A group that serves together stays together. They know their worth.

## **LEADERS TAKING TIME TO CONNECT**

If you have multiple groups in your body, take some time during your breaks for your leaders to connect to other leaders. Being a leader can be lonely at times. Small group members don't always see the vision nor have the commitment that the leaders do. Leaders should meet together to fellowship, minister and teach each other. Take time to keep the vision and the drive alive. Come together and seek the loving guidance that God has for you. Don't try to lead your groups from your own efforts, but rather lead them from the overflow of the love God has given you. Connect to one another as leaders and you will probably find your groups connecting to one another as a community.

## **TAKING TIME TO GROW TOGETHER**

Our small group meetings keep us focused on the how to of forming a community that is centered on Christ. But a strict routine of meeting can leave us with little time to explore our worth as a group. Take some time and stop the meetings to practice small group life together.

- Use your break times to connect outside of the meetings and create that lifestyle of community together.
- Bring a new believer into your group and explore the joy that comes from taking the time to disciple someone.
- Serve someone as a group and grow closer together.
- Pull your leaders together and find your groups connecting to one another.

As a busy world presses in on each of us, let there be no question as to the priority that our small groups have in our lives. Discover your worth as a community that follows Christ.