



Small Groups Guide

1. Of first importance:

- Setting the right atmosphere.
- Having clear leadership and purpose, [although for some groups shared leadership or organisation by consensus might be appropriate].
- Providing a “safe space” where there is trust and confidentiality.

2. Essential ingredients of a meeting:

- Accessible resources – provided by the Table Groups Co-ordinator and website.
- Christ-centred and scripture based.
- Include food/refreshments.
- Prayer.
- Honest and genuine sharing of ourselves.

3. How we treat people:

- Hosts should create a welcoming atmosphere and help people to relax and feel comfortable.
- Aim to involve everyone [but never force them].
- Aim to keep a balance of contributions within the group by holding back the more talkative/dominant and encouraging the quiet/shy/nervous and delegating as appropriate.
- Aim to empower, value and support others, seeking to release them into the fullness of their gifts and abilities.
- Treat everybody with respect and their contributions as valuable.
- Avoid criticism but include lots of encouragement!
- Everyone should be natural and focus on serving and blessing others in the group.
- Everyone should bear in mind the acronym GRACE – give; receive; accept; care; encourage.
- Table groups are an ideal place to look out for one another, support and pray through the ups and downs of life and provide occasional practical support.

4. Other practicalities:

- Every group is different, so stick to the basic principles but shape them to your group’s needs. Not every gathering will necessarily be the same or include all the ingredients. The aim is to avoid rigid uniformity but enable flexibility, whilst maintaining a healthy balance.
- Agree together the timing, frequency and regularity of your group.

- Consider occasional special events such as a social, BBQ or picnic, party, or an “open” evening where friends are invited. Ideally, the group should become more than just the meeting.
- Be structured but flexible and creative.
- There are times when it is appropriate to encourage individuals to seek help elsewhere; the pastor, pastoral care and safeguarding team are available for this.
- Please contact us at smallgroups@thepeopleschurch.org.uk with any queries, comments or questions that arise regarding resources, the running of your group or if you would appreciate help with specific issues.