

SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES FOR A HEALTHY CULTURE

A Supplement to Chapter 8 of *Disciple-Making Culture* by Brandon Guindon

Confidentiality

By keeping things that are shared in the group confidential, we build trust and show value to each person. Confidentiality can prevent gossip, which values only a person's story; Jesus always valued the person above their story or their sin.

Don't Rescue and Don't Fix

When someone is sharing something deeply personal or painful (or both), there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or their situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and result in their not going as deep as they might have otherwise gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people. Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they will ask for it. You may want to take time later to ask if you can offer some advice.

No Crosstalk

Be considerate of others as they share. Don't have side conversations. Trust is built in the moments when everyone feels like they are being listened to and heard by the entire group. Treat others in the group as you would want to be treated.

Use Humor Responsibly

Fun is an essential part of small groups; however, keep sarcastic comments, jokes, and laughter to a minimum to allow for an atmosphere of authenticity and vulnerability.

Give Everyone a Chance to Share

Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Encourage everyone to participate in group discussions.

Use "I" Statements

During small group, we want to hear your personal thoughts and perspectives. Using "I" statements to answer discussion questions allows you to speak for yourself rather than generalizing by using terms such as "them," "the church," "us," or "we."

Fight for Relationship

Relationship reaches a whole new level when conflict is resolved in a healthy manner. When conflict or sin issues arise between group members, commit to fighting for the relationship and discuss the struggle with the person you are in conflict with, or you may want to seek wise counsel on how to resolve the conflict with that person.