

# Guidelines For Accountability Discipleship Groups

by Michael Beck

## **1. The PURPOSE of the meeting is to more fully communicate with each other our fellowship with God and His workings in our hearts, and to hold each other accountable for what the Lord has given us.**

The first disciples walked with Christ *together*. Our fellowship as a body is as rich or as shallow as our communication with each other. As we share with each other how we are "working out our own salvation with fear and trembling" we are able to know each other more deeply and love each other more fervently. We truly see we are "members one of another" and all part of one body.

We are called to "bear one another's burdens." It is only when we "see" the need in another's life that we can develop a burden for them. Fuller and more transparent communication enables us to suffer when another suffers and rejoice when they rejoice. Increased sensitivity to one another will spur us to pray and intercede for each other more perfectly.

As disciples of Christ we are called to diligently follow Him. As "stewards" of the mysteries of God we are accountable for what we have received from God. We are required to be faithful doers of the word and not hearers only. Our care for another should include exhortations to faithfulness and holding one another accountable to the standards Christ has set for us. In coming together, we seek to edify, exhort and comfort one another. As those who are hastening to meet the Lord, we desire to be personally challenged by our brethren and at the same time we wish to "consider" others and "provoke" them unto love and good works.

## **2. Share PRESENT dealings of the Holy Spirit in one's life.**

Sharing the challenges which God is *presently* giving us is a mark of humility which encourages others to "open up" and share similar experiences in their walk.

Relate when and how (through what means) God began dealing with you in a new and fresh way about a specific area of obedience He is requiring of you.

In sharing present (or past) struggles or sin, be discreet about details.

Before sharing, ask the Holy Spirit how much detail is necessary in order to communicate the nature of your struggle.

Never share something which will prove an embarrassment to another (whether they be present or absent, believer or non-believer, adult or child.)

### **3. Be CAREFUL not to move too quickly on to a completely different subject.**

Sufficient space should be allowed for the Holy Spirit to "quicken" others in regards to a given area of obedience before the group's "gears switch" to a new subject.

Give the Holy Spirit space to allow others to share similar struggles about that area or minister what God has taught or is teaching them about it.

### **4. Do not feel it necessary to RESOLVE every issue in a given meeting.**

Oswald Chambers wrote that we are often "baffled to fight better." Paul wrote we are "perplexed, but not in despair." Sometimes it is important to simply state where our struggle lies. "Confess your faults one to another." We should be "quick to hear" and "slow to speak."

Be prayerful throughout the meeting.

Particularly when others share a struggle or burden be prayerful about your contribution. There may be immediate help you can give, whether in the group or privately, but this may not always be the case. It may be necessary now that you are aware of another's struggles to carry their burden in your spirit and continue in prayer for them.

Rather than having immediate, easy answers, it is often more comforting to know that people know of our struggle and will be praying for us. Remember Job's "comforters."

Sensitivity should be exercised as to when, where and how one who has shared a burden should be prayed for.

Immediate, on-the-spot prayer is sometimes called for and other times should be refrained from.

Prayer should conclude each meeting.

### **5. Maintain FOCUS.**

Meetings which allow for "free discussion" often have difficulty staying focused, as people wish to share various experiences which sometimes are not pertinent to the issues at hand.

Outside of the most urgent requests that need to be brought to the group's attention, requests for prayer can be made in other meetings or privately to individuals before or after the meeting.

Effort should be made to keep the meeting focused. For the reason the moderator should be allowed to "move" the conversation.

The moderator will take his/her cue from the "Monthly Review." The 'review' will

provide direction for the discussion as those present relate how they have responded to and applied current "words of exhortation" given in the past month to our church family.

This does not mean the Holy Spirit cannot change the order of the meeting. "The wind blows where it wills." Yet, outside of such a "move" attention should remain on the "review."

## **6. Keep within time LIMITS set for the meeting.**

Although there can be a direction of the Holy Spirit to extend the meeting, in general, the moderator should begin and end the meeting at specified times. Those wishing to stay and fellowship or pray with each other more may do so once the meeting has "officially" concluded.

In light of the limited time of our meeting each member of the group should be considerate of the others and be careful not to "monopolize" the conversation.

Keep stories particularly of *past* experiences, brief and to the point.

## **7. Let the chief rule of each meeting be LOVE.**

Interacting with others always includes the possibilities of being "rubbed the wrong way" or rubbing someone else the wrong way. Irritations, even offenses may come. But "let brotherly love continue." Use such irritations to practice more of the love, gentleness and patience of Christ.

May the world know we are His disciples by the **love** we have one for another.

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