



Maintaining a Spiritual Focus GroupWords

Small group leadership is a detail-intensive ministry. Lesson preparation and regular contact with group members are hard enough to squeeze into a busy leader's calendar. Add to these the scheduling of hosts and refreshments, information updates, and it becomes one of the most demanding ministries in the church.

With all these elements to keep up with, it is easy to get caught at the edges of Small Group ministry and lose the center. Here are some ways to maintain a spiritual focus.

GROWTH ATMOSPHERE — A small group leader can provide an atmosphere for spiritual growth. Make the spiritual success of your group members your goal as a small group leader. Be willing to do whatever it takes to help your members find God's will for their lives and move in an upward direction.

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION — We correctly think of small groups as a wonderful opportunity to build relationships. But the Word of God should still be the foundation and guide for the group. Whatever the topic or discussion, be sure that God's voice is heard. *"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness"* (2 Timothy 3:16).

PERSONAL HOLINESS — The most important group preparation you can do is in your own life. You cannot lead people to a place you have not been. So, ask yourself these questions:

HOLINESS: *Am I progressively moving away from sin?*

GOD'S WORD: *Is God's Word food to me, and am I spending time in it?*

WORSHIP: *Am I worshipping regularly, both privately and corporately?*

EVANGELISM: *Am I sharing my faith regularly?*

PRAYER: *Am I daily talking and listening to God in prayer?*

SOLITUDE: *Have I been alone with God enough to hear his voice clearly?*

SERVING: *Am I using the abilities God has given me?*

PROGRESS: *Am I further along in my relationship with God than I was a year ago?*

INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE — A spiritual leader will come to know their group members well, beginning with little things. Knowing birthdays of group members. Knowing their children. Knowing their struggles, how they best connect, how they react, think, or feel. And yes, these can be difficult things to know. But this is the nature of a small group. Everyone is better when they are known.

PRAYER AND DEPENDENCE — We will never experience any real spiritual success if we try to lead our groups with our own power and wisdom. We must consciously depend on God, praying daily and fervently for God to do his work among our group members.

Thanks for accepting this important task ... leading ... listening ... learning ... teaching. It is one of the most rewarding ministries you will ever be a part of.