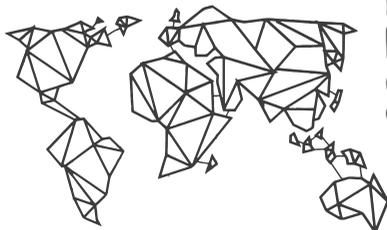




<sup>1</sup> Henry Cloud and John  
Townsend, *Making Small Groups  
Work* (Grand Rapids, MI:  
Zondervan, 2003), 28.

Notes:

**GREAT  
COMMISSION  
LEADERSHIP**  
HOMEWORK  
PACKET  
TWENTY-SIX



## LEADING MULTIPLYING SMALL GROUPS [PART 2]

### SMALL GROUP FUNDAMENTALS

*Small groups are not an add-on, secondary concern, or fad. What happens in a good small group is part of the very work of the church itself. It is primary and should be seen that way.<sup>1</sup>*

**Cloud and Townsend**

### BEFORE GOING ANY FURTHER, IS CHRIST ON THE THRONE?

If not, make sure He is!

### MEMORY VERSE

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.*

**1 Thessalonians 5:11 [NIV]**

### ACTION-ORIENTED FELLOWSHIP

Jesus has promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus has never missed a Bible study small group and He will be at each of yours, no matter how small! Christians need each other and discipleship requires small group fellowship. The early church understood this. Believers, in the early church, met in homes, unlike the large buildings we have today (Rom. 16:5, 1 Cor. 16:19, Col. 4:15, Philemon 1:2). This created a great context of love, friendship, accountability, and growth, and these believers enjoyed relevant teaching, praise, authentic fellowship, prayer, met needs, powerful ministry, gladness, commitment, and sincerity together (Acts 2:42-47). Such vibrant ministry only occurs when Christians truly become unified with each other and Christ, and this is God's will for His church (Jn. 13:35, 17:20-23). The early church was a great example of believers growing together in small group settings and godly leaders will always facilitate multiplying Bible study small groups in ministry.

<sup>2</sup> Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups*, Rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 9.

Notes:

## SMALL GROUPS VERSUS CLIQUES

Jeffrey Arnold describes the differences between small groups and cliques using the following comparison<sup>2</sup>:

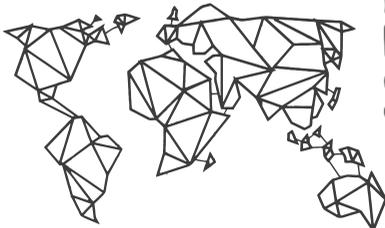
Cliques...	Small Groups...
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are closed to new members.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are open to new members.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are inward-focused.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are outward-focused.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...have controlling leadership.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...have Spirit-led leadership.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are past-oriented.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are future-oriented.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are elitist.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are inclusive.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are static.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are fluid/multiplying.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...lean toward talk.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...lean toward action.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are segmented.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are integrated.
<input type="checkbox"/> ...are unintentional.	<input type="checkbox"/> ...are intentional.

- **Consider your small group (either one you lead or participate in) and evaluate it according to these criteria. After evaluating your small group, is it more like an authentic small group or more like a clique?**

## HEALTHY SMALL GROUP CONTEXTS

Cultivate good group dynamics by encouraging participation! Ask specific individuals for their thoughts and ideas. Draw the quiet ones out and gently keep the loud ones from dominating. Facilitate discussion—this should not be a monologue. Remember, develop friendships with those in your Bible study and strive to disciple each of them. Small groups and one-on-one discipleship are two of the four contexts of discipleship, so they should be done together. Create a healthy small group context by having fun together, genuinely loving each other, praying together, learning together, keeping each other accountable, doing evangelism together, and growing in God's Word together.

- **Consider small groups you have participated in, in the past. Have any of them focused solely on either Bible lecture fellowship/activity? How does that compare to the healthy small group context mentioned above?**



<sup>3</sup> Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 6-19.

<sup>5</sup> Jeffrey Arnold, *The Big Book on Small Groups, Rev. Ed.* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 98.

<sup>6</sup> Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>9</sup> Dave Early and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Your Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 2007), 121-124.

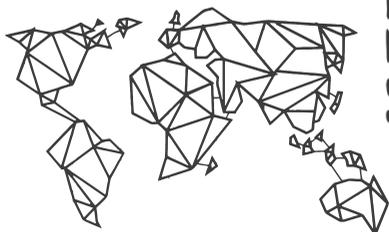
Notes:

→ **What are some steps you could take to cultivate the right context for your Bible study small groups?**

## A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

This section will cover methods from *Now That's a Good Question*<sup>3</sup>, by Terry Powell. Powell shares the **CLIMATE** acronym for small groups<sup>4</sup>:

- » **Caring.** People will be better at interacting if they know that they are cared for. Encourage and develop ways that group members can share group care.<sup>5</sup> Contact people throughout the week. Do outside the group activities. Spend the first several weeks focusing on team building not just biblical content alone.<sup>6</sup>
- » **Laughter.** Laughter not only helps break the ice but it is important to add laughter in the study time itself. Laughter shouldn't be avoided overall, as it aids in retention of content.<sup>7</sup>
- » **Intercession.** Pray for your small group members and have a time set aside during the meeting time to pray together.
- » **Methodology.** Having a variety of methods of encouraging discussion will have a greater impact on the learning environment. Change things up on a regular basis.
- » **Assimilation.** It is important to have a team building activity every time someone new joins the group. Assign someone as a host who can help facilitate a welcoming environment.
- » **Transparency.** Model transparency. Transparency helps establish fellowship. A tip on how to encourage transparency is to ask for personal reactions to the lesson.<sup>8</sup>
- » **Environment.** The physical environment affects learning and relationships. Be creative. *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group* describes this,<sup>9</sup> explaining the following principles. Prepare the meeting place. Make sure it is a clean environment. Have drinks and snacks. Greet people when they enter. Encourage the host to get into a conversation with new people. Make sure to have all the supplies you'll need. Make sure the room is well lit. If using visual aids, make sure everything is cued up. Watch the thermostat: if it is too cold it will be uncomfortable, if it is too hot, people will get sleepy. Finally, eliminate any potential distractions.



<sup>10</sup> Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007), 53-62.

Notes:

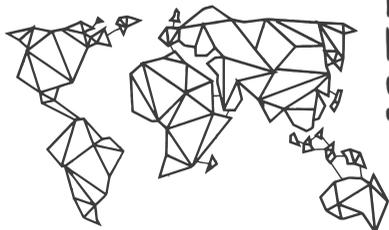
## SMALL GROUP COVENANTS

Soon after getting a small group going, create a small group covenant. Arnold states, "...Covenant[s] will help the group identify itself and its purpose, and it will help hold the individuals accountable to the group."<sup>3</sup> Allow the small group to determine the covenant, so you'll have group buy-in, but guide this process to make sure the covenant includes the seven fundamentals described in the MUSTARD acronym (from last week's homework packet). This will give everyone involved a better understanding of what to expect and how they'll fit in with the small group.

- **How have you seen a small group covenant (or lack thereof) affect groups you've been a part of?**

## ASK GOOD QUESTIONS

Asking good questions is fundamental to facilitating good group dynamics. Powell describes the following characteristics of effective questions.<sup>10</sup> Effective questions must be clear. They must be easy to understand. Don't ask, "What about...?" questions. Ask one question at a time. Keep them short. Effective questions must be relevant. Avoid speculative questions that ask for information not revealed in the text; these lead to an inaccurate interpretation. Avoid irrelevant questions. Avoid questions that focus on a part of the passage that takes it out of context. Avoid questions that usurp biblical authority. A classic example is, "What does this verse mean to you?" Questions like that can get away from analyzing the text and make interpretation subjective. Be careful with sensitive questions. Keep personal questions voluntary. Keep questions realistic. Don't ask for information that goes beyond the text. Instead share the information. Effective questions are thought-provoking. Effective questions are open-ended, not yes or no questions. Open-ended questions keep the conversation going, while yes and no questions tend to end the conversation. Keep away from obvious questions—where the answers are clear to everyone. Keep away from leading questions. These questions can result in people feeling that their intelligence was insulted, and ask for a yes or no response. Avoid questions that begin with, "Don't you think...,"



<sup>11</sup> Terry Powell, *Now That's a Good Question: How to Lead Quality Bible Discussions* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 2007), 77-91.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>13</sup> Jerry Jones and Becky Harling, *201 Great Questions* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1988).

<sup>14</sup> Dave Early and Rod Dempsey, *The Pocket Guide to Leading a Small Group: 52 Ways to Help You and Your Small Group Grow* (Houston, TX: TOUCH Publications, 2007), 35.

Notes:

"Isn't...," etc.. Effective questions must facilitate discussion.<sup>11</sup> Do this by exhibiting enthusiasm and sincerity. Watch out for your non-verbal cues. Don't look at your notes when someone is speaking. Wait for a response after asking a question. Don't jump in to answer your own question. Waiting is beneficial because you'll get more accurate responses, it will encourage better analytical thinking, more participants will respond and ask questions.<sup>12</sup> Finally, ask follow up questions to members' feedback. Encourage group members to answer fellow group members' questions.

Asking good questions shows people you care and makes them feel loved. It also helps you really understand where they're at in their growth. Determine today to ask great questions. Please check out *201 Great Questions*<sup>13</sup> to greatly expand your ability to use good questions.

→ **What kind of questions do you usually ask (close-ended, open-ended, clear, realistic, discussion-facilitating, etc.)?**

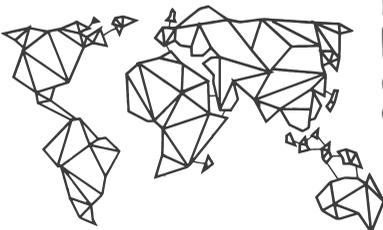
→ **How do your questions encourage (or limit) conversation?**

→ **How can you practice asking better, conversation-motivating questions in your small groups?**

## FIVE TIPS FOR SOLID SMALL GROUPS

Dave Early writes, "By studying cell group and small group ministry and thinking through my own experience, I identified five practices that made the difference between health and disease, effectiveness and ineffectiveness."<sup>14</sup> Here are the five principles he discovered.

1. Healthy groups are welcoming. They love one another, have a time of greeting before the meeting, honor one another, give



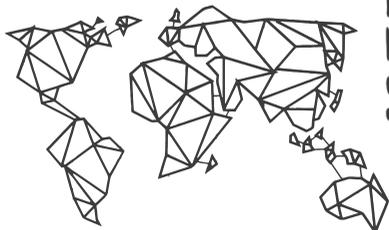
Notes:

undivided attention to the one speaking, accept each other, encourage one another, forgive one another, do not gossip, submit to one another, show hospitality and humility, confess sin and are accountable to one another and then challenge each other to go outside comfort zones. These groups deal with conflict correctly. They contact group members throughout the week and spend time together outside the Bible Study to have fun together.

2. Healthy groups worship. They set aside time to worship together during the meeting.
  3. Healthy groups witness. Groups that fail to multiply will not thrive. Set up small groups to multiply, training apprentice leaders and sharing responsibilities with group members in order to train them how to lead a Bible Study. Early even suggests keeping an empty chair at your meeting to remind people of the need to invite new people. Pray for a person to fill this chair. Talk about multiplication often. This should be part of the group covenant. Invite new members including friends, co-workers, classmates and roommates. Set aside times to share the gospel together. Use the Bible study as an evangelism tool. Come up with a top ten list and take time during the meeting to pray for those people.
  4. Healthy groups must study God's Word. This should not be just a time to "hang out."
  5. Healthy groups do good works together. This includes ministering together as a group.
- **Which of these five principles are most critical for you to apply, right now?**

## COMMON ISSUES IN SMALL GROUPS

Keeping the study on track can be challenging at times. Listen carefully, while others talk, take notes, and then ask questions to get good interaction. Discussion, clarification, setting the direction, and make sure everyone gets involved and has a role. Gently stop bunny trails and reign in the conversation when needed (ex. say, "That's



Notes:

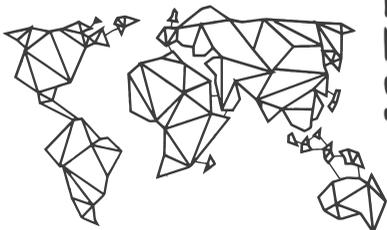
interesting. Let's talk about it later," or, "How about [x, y, or z], what does it mean and how can we apply it?").

- **How can you make sure everyone in your Bible study has a voice while maintaining direction?**

Co-ed Bible study small groups can also present challenges, especially with youth or young adults. Men's Bible studies and women's Bible studies provide a growth context for men and women separately that is either missing in, or not beneficial for, a co-ed setting. Small groups in churches can and should offer some co-ed small group Bible studies (ex. families, singles), but not at the expense of men's and women's small groups. Remember Pr. 27:17, which states, "iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." Separate men's and women's Bible studies allow for intentional discussion regarding issues that would be inappropriate for co-ed studies—issues like lust, insecurities, pornography—addition, Biblical sexuality, etc..

- **How have you grown in men's or women's Bible studies compared to co-ed groups?**

Peoples' flesh will come out. Remember, becoming Christ-like requires dealing with sin. This might result in awkward situations, broken relationships, gossip, and/or anger. Do your best to reconcile relationships and help people do the right thing. (Please review Homework Packet 12 for more on conflict resolution.) Do not be passive during these times. Walk in humble and encouraging authority. Do not compromise the truth of God's Word. Do not be afraid of silent periods of contemplation; let God work. Diffuse arguments. Stop pride and one-up-man-ship. Deal with awkward social issues carefully and appropriately. It is okay to discuss denominational issues when relevant, but let God through Scripture have the final say (and be willing to encourage discussion after the small group time). Be patient. Show mercy, grace, and Agape love.



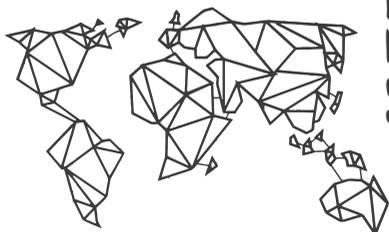


Notes:

→ **How have you seen awkward situations handled in small groups in the past and what would you do differently?**

Leading quality Bible study small groups is a challenge but this is a key part of fulfilling the Great Commission and multiplying Christ-like multipliers. Remember to strategically organize gospel groups, growth groups, and Great Commission groups. Keep growing as a Bible study leader. Don't get discouraged if your first experiences leading small groups fail to meet your expectations. Keep leading and trusting God to grow you as a leader.

*Remember, your weaknesses, inabilities, failures and past present no challenge to God's will for your life. Your willingness does. Be willing to be and do what God made you for. You don't have what it takes but God's Spirit in you does so be the leader He made you to be and turn this world upside down for Him!*





<sup>15</sup> Bill Donahue, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 10-12.

Notes:

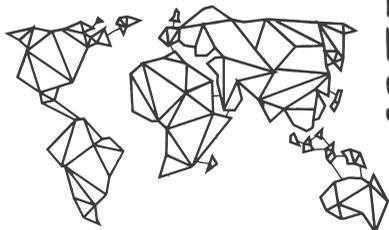
## ACT NOW

### EVALUATE YOUR SMALL GROUPS

Bill Donahue describes the “seven deadly sins” that plague Bible Study small groups in his book, *The Seven Deadly Sins of Small Group Ministry*.<sup>15</sup> These are: [1] unclear ministry objectives, [2] lack of point leadership, [3] poor coaching structures, [4] neglect of ongoing leadership development, [5] closed group mindset, [6] narrow definition of a small group, and [7] neglect of the assimilation process.

→ **Evaluate your own Bible study small groups according to these “seven sins”.** Preferably, evaluate a study you are leading or have led; if you have not led a study yet, evaluate one you’re currently involved in.

1. Do you know the role your Bible study plays in, not only your ministry, but the Great Commission as a whole? How does this impact the way you lead, or the trajectory of your group’s growth?
2. Is there clarity in the leadership structure of your Bible study small group (do people know who to look to for direction)? How does this affect the health of your small group?
3. Are you discipling the members of your small group Bible Study? How does this impact growth overall?
4. Do you have ongoing support and encouragement to develop as a leader? How does this impact your ability to lead a Bible study?





Notes:

5. Have you (or others) felt hesitant about welcoming new members into your small group? Based on what you have learned, how does this impact your Bible study?

6. Are you willing to let God lead your Bible study and make it what He wants (especially if this is outside of your comfort zone)? How do your expectations of what a small group should look like, and/or your trust in Jesus, impact your leadership?

7. How do you welcome new people into your small group Bible study? Write down some steps you can take to in order to help new members feel more integral to the group.

→ **Prayerfully consider how you'll lead Bible studies differently in the future!**

