

HELP TINY GROUPS TO GROW

A tiny group of seekers or believers has begun to gather in a home, at work, or on a school campus. Those who are involved would like to see their group grow in numbers, until it can start other new groups. They ask you, "What can we do to help our group to bring in more folk?"

Before you reply to their query, you learn what you can about their group, its participants, its activities, its opportunities, its venue, its current activities. You review with them some practices that have helped others to grow little groups.

Which of the following practices might help their group to grow? In what ways could they modify these guidelines to fit their situation and culture? What other ideas do you or they have in mind? You pray together to Jesus, asking him for the kind of wisdom promised in James 1:5. Then, you plan together what they will do immediately.

Principle: Do everything in ways that anyone can imitate, and give them permission to do so.

1. Keep gatherings joyful, more like a celebration or a family gathering than like a funeral. Speak with a natural voice, without preaching, shouting or scolding. Since everyone gets scolded by others all week long, many will gladly come into a gathering where they experience more love than what they deserve. John 13:35
2. Keep gatherings interactive. Everyone is allowed to answer questions, to share their needs, to tell their experiences, to testify about how God has helped them, to urge each other to trust in God, to obey Jesus words, to pray one for another. 1 Corinthians 14:26
3. Pray together often to the Lord Jesus for him to bring others who need his mercy, his help, and his salvation. Pray for divine encounters to happen, in which participants may invite others come to us, or in which they invite you to come to their place. After all, it is the Lord who adds new believers to a gathering. Acts 2:47
4. Remind participants that they are welcome to invite others to the gathering. Ask those present whom they think needs to hear about Jesus and receive God's love. Have all those present pray together for those others to come and to meet Jesus. Matthew 16:18
5. Employ discovery Bible learning: Read or tell a Bible story, then have others retell the story in their own words. Pose queries about what they have learned, and let them help each other to answer. Invite those present to tell with whom they will share the story this week. Pray together for those others. Matthew 13:3; Romans 15:14
6. Pray together in the Name of the Lord Jesus for each one's urgent needs. Pray for specific, verifiable answers. Put Jesus on the spot to make himself known. Urge those present to start praying with Jesus' Name for others whom they meet during the week. James 5:16
7. Consciously obey together the basic commandments of Jesus, in ways that others could do the same: sing praise to God, pray to Jesus, invite repentance, baptise, commune, give to meet needs, teach each other the little they know. God adds new ones to gatherings that freely obey Jesus' commandments. John 14:15
8. Conduct 'prayer walks' whereby believers go into streets or around villages, quietly praying for the LORD to bless folk by meeting their earthly and eternal needs. When anyone asks about why you are there, offer to pray for their family's specific needs. Start a new gathering with these or have a neighbour invite them to a gathering. Acts 16:13