



SMALL GROUP BEST PRACTICES

Leadership Group Guide - July 2022

Despite the busyness of the summer months, we are still called to share the Gospel and make disciples. We believe that discipleship happens best through our Small Groups, which is why it's the most important thing we do. To effectively lead and facilitate our groups, please review these seven best practices:

- **Opening a Second Pocket in the Week:** In any given week, schedules can change, preventing people from being able to attend the scheduled group day and time. Consider opening a second pocket for group in the week on a different time and/or day- in person or online- to provide another opportunity for relational discipleship to happen. The second pocket can be led by the group leader, apprentice, or anyone else the leader empowers to facilitate. Attendance for both pockets can be combined in the weekly attendance count.
- **Clustering:** When there are more than five people, cluster into groups of 3-5 by empowering another facilitator. A smaller cluster for discussion enables deeper relationships, provides more time for sharing, and creates a more intimate environment for deeper discussion and prayer.
- **Empowering Others:** Small Group is a great place to give other members opportunities to grow in their leadership. Empower others to facilitate the group meeting, lead a cluster, start a second pocket in the week, and/or help with group communications (i.e. getting RSVPs, submitting the group attendance and, following up with those who couldn't attend, etc.).
- **Attendance RSVPs:** Rather than waiting until the day of group, send an initial RSVP two or three days in advance. This enables leaders to have an idea of what attendance will look like and what adjustments need to be made for the week (i.e. adjusting the day and/or time, opening a second pocket, etc.). A final reminder can be sent out the day of group. This also provides accountability for members to attend.
- **Starting and Finishing on Time:** We always want to honor one another's time. Start and end the meeting on time, and encourage members to come on time. Those running late can join the discussion when they arrive. The recommended duration of group should be an hour to an hour and fifteen minutes. Fellowship can happen before and after the designated group meeting times.
- **Remaining Focused on the Guide:** Our group discussions are sermon-based, which allow us to go deeper in applying God's Word and the weekend message to our lives. Although some may want to talk about other topics or hot-button issues, facilitators must bring the focus back to the guide to prevent the discussion from going off-topic. Other topics can be discussed before or after group meetings.

- **Making Time for the Prayer Points:** Praying for one another and those we are reaching is an important part of group. End the discussion portion of the guide in the time allotted in order to thoroughly pray through each point. Consider praying in groups of two or three to maximize prayer and ministry time.

Discussion Question & Application (45 minutes):

1. Which of the seven best practices does your group need to improve on? How can addressing these areas improve the quality of your group and your members' discipleship? Share practical ways you can implement these best practices moving forward.
2. Along with your apprentice, who are others in the group that you can empower? What could you have them do? After identifying them, discuss these potential roles with them this week.

Prayer Points (15 minutes):

1. Pray that our groups would remain focused in sharing the Gospel and making disciples.
2. Pray for a wave of new leaders, new groups, and for the harvest to get connected into these groups to begin discipleship.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Pearlside Small Group Leaders Podcast

Listen to our weekly podcast to help prepare as you lead your Small Group. This is a valuable resource that you can use to equip your apprentices to lead a cluster or prepare them to start their own group. The podcast can be accessed on our **Pearlside App under Small Group Leaders Resources** or through [Spotify](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#). Search for *Pearlside Small Group Leaders Podcast*.

Pearlside App Tutorials

[How to connect your mobile number to the Pearlside App](#)

[How to record your Small Group Attendance on the Pearlside App](#)

[How to record your Small Group Attendance through your email](#)