

Help! My Small Group Has Problems!

A Small Group Will Have Problems if it Has Any People in it

- Jesus' own Small Group has problems—it was filled with stubborn and faithless people, yet God worked powerfully through this group and individuals in it
- Don't expect people to be perfect
- Let God put a sense of expectancy in you
- Soak your Small Group members in prayer

What Does the Bible Say to Do About Problems?

- When you have problems you should rejoice! (James 1:1-4)
- If your Small Group has big problems, then you should be especially thankful
- Problems are an opportunity for you:
 1. To grow as a leader
 2. To train your interns

Small Group Problems You Might Be Experiencing

- Don't compare your current Small Group to the groups of others or previous groups that you have led
- Give Jesus responsibility for what happens at the Small Group meeting

How to Move Through Conflict

- Create ownership by involving people in decisions and tasks
- Spend lots of time with people listening—remember that you have two ears and one mouth

When Your People Have Problems

- Pray and expect miracles
- Don't shepherd the wrong people
- Don't fix anyone—leave that up to Jesus

Problem Solving

- Brainstorm solutions for the following problems:
 1. The Talker — Imagine that Linda talks far too much in your Small Group meetings and “chases rabbits.” What should be done? What might be some possible solutions to change the situation?
 2. Small Group Leader Burnout — Imagine that a friend of yours is experiencing burnout as a group leader. What might be the root of the problem? What could be possible solutions?
 3. Chronic Needs — George loves coming to your Small Group. Every week he seems to come with a different crisis that requires attention of prayer. His continual sharing seems to be taking a toll on your meetings. What might be some possible plans of action?

Possible Solutions

- The Talker
 1. Sit next to the person after they sit down. By reducing eye contact you minimize permission to speak.
 2. Take the conversation and hand it off when the Talker takes a breath by saying, “Thanks for sharing, Linda! Does anyone else have something they want to share on the original topic?”
 3. Talk with the person one-on-one and explain when one or two people dominate the meeting the quieter people do not enter in.
 4. If necessary develop a hand signal to help the Talker know their limit.
- Small Group Leader Burnout
 1. Take time with God. Be refreshed and seek Him for your own needs.
 2. Learn to do what God is doing in His power, instead of your own.
 3. Plan one or two months ahead to enable you to delegate better and to vary the activities and agenda of your Small Group.
 4. Discern when to say “no.” His yoke is easy and light. If things seem hard and heavy, you are probably taking on things that He does not want you to do. (Matthew 11:28-30)
 5. Learn to blend the different areas of your life.
 6. Don't try to be God by attempting to meet everyone's needs—it's a lot of work and you can't do it!
- Chronic Needs
 1. Don't expect your Small Group meeting to allow time for ministry to everyone's needs.
 2. Ask God to bring healing and freedom at the root of the problems. Pray for the person through the week and encourage them to attend an Encounter God retreat.
 3. Use resources beyond yourself such as your Intern, your Small Group Coach, the Pastors, Christian counselors, and consumer credit agencies.

Special Situations

- When someone has financial needs
 1. Don't give money directly to individuals (this creates problems and allows people to avoid root problems)
 2. Let your coach know when there is a financial need that the church should perhaps help with.
 3. The coach will take this to the pastors for benevolence consideration.
- Hospital Visitation (see appendix)