

Tips for Ministry Time

Ministry in the Small Group

One of the main purposes of small groups is spiritual growth and nurture. We see the Holy Spirit's ministry as the essential component to accomplish this. Our desire is to see the Spirit work in power through Scripture, worship, and the ministry of the gifts. This part of a meeting focuses on the Spirit's ministry through the gifts and prayer.

This is not intended to say that ministry should be segmented to only one part of the meeting. In one sense, the whole meeting is ministry. So "ministry time" should be the outgrowth of and flow from the rest of the meeting. Having a specific time where we pray for one another in the power of the Spirit is essential for the spiritual growth and nurture of our people.

This portion of the meeting should take 20-30 minutes. It is usually a good way to conclude the meeting.

Facilitating ministry time effectively means that you must observe what has been said during the icebreaker, teaching, and worship times. As you discern what God is doing in these parts of the meeting, ministry will flow.

A good question to ask at the beginning of ministry time is, "Does anyone have a word or picture from the Lord to share for the edification of the group?" Ask the Lord for revelatory gifts—words of knowledge, words of wisdom. Each person should have their "spiritual antennae" up and be "tuned in" to what the Lord is saying and what the people are saying during the meeting. As people reveal their needs and you sense what God is doing, ministry will happen.

Facilitating Ministry

You can pray as one group, groups of 3 or 4, or break down according to gender. If you pray as a group, the leader must take the initiative by getting up and praying for an individual. Ask one or two others to help you pray. Then ask them to continue praying for that person, while you turn to the rest of the group and direct more prayer to begin, if it hasn't already. It's important that the leader gets out of their seat, involves others, and stimulates prayer ministry.

Each person can share one prayer need. Then pray for one another without giving counsel. Counsel is not appropriate at this time.

Don't allow one person to dominate the prayer request time or share their needs at length. Remember, only one need until everyone has been prayed for at least once. If a person is especially draining or discouraging, have a separate time of prayer for them on another night. But don't let this person drain all your energy. Ask your Coach or a Pastor for help if someone has needs that are too large or overwhelming.

Be considerate of new people. Don't embarrass them. Explain what the group is doing in non-religious terms to the whole group. Don't single them out. But do be sensitive to their needs and offer to pray for them if it seems appropriate. It's especially important that you don't allow needy people to drain the group of energy in the presence of a guest.