

**Small Groups** are meetings that invite interaction and involvement within a pleasant and respectful environment. These groups meet to explore and understand the realities of this world in the light of God’s love and truth. The goal of the group is to promote spiritual growth, develop meaningful supportive relationships and share the love of God in practical ways.

This week we will look briefly at small group dynamics and the “Power of our Testimony”. As we begin our study it is important to identify some of our goals and objectives. We are all “busy” with various demands and requirements and yet we have decided to set aside this time to meet together. List some of the reasons you feel this weekly study time is important. What do you personally hope to achieve or learn from this study time?

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Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11. What are some ways that you and can comfort and edify the members of this small group? What are areas in your life that need to be built up and strengthened?

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Within each group is a mix of personalities, gifts, talents, needs, desires,... Every week issues will change but certain aspects must always be present, such as:

- 1. Trust** is vital. You will only share your true struggles and joys with those you trust, likewise others will share with you only if you can be trusted. Identify some ways that trust is gained as well as given.

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Identify ways that trust is undermined.

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- 2. Humility** is essential. We will share with one another because we desire support, encouragement, or direction from someone we can relate to. Be patient, compassionate, and considerate of one another. “Be swift to hear, slow to speak”. Read Titus 3:1-9. What points stand out to you concerning trust and humility?

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- 3. Prayer** is a priority and privilege. Pray for one another, pray with one another. Recognize that God will teach you to pray as He also taught the disciples.(Luke 11:1) Turn to Ephesians 3:14-19 and discuss what this 'believers' prayer reveals about;
  - a. Our needs
  - b. His will
  - c. The importance of love

In the book of Acts we have Paul’s “testimony’ recorded three times (9:1-9, 22:1-16, 26:12). The purpose for this is not to draw attention to Paul but rather to declare what God has done in and through Paul’s life. The life changing work of God in the lives of individuals reveals His love to the world. The early church was filled with transformed people; individuals who had responded to God’s love and experienced the power of the gospel. This life changing work of Jesus Christ is what empowers people to stand in the days of trial and adversity. Our lives are a living testimony of the presence and power of God. When we speak to others about being “born again” we are not promoting an idea, we are proclaiming His power in us, personally! It is important to be able to speak of what God has done for you concerning salvation.

If you are ready, share your testimony tonight. If you are not ready at this time, prepare by writing out your testimony this week. Do this by praying and asking God to remind you and reveal to you the work He has done. Ask Him to reveal any false motives(such as pride) that may be present. Admit them and give them to Him. As you write, rejoice, remembering what He has rescued you from. Be ready to share your testimony, that wonderful life-changing work God has brought about, next week.

P.S. Some testimonies are dramatic and exciting, others seem to be quiet and almost boring. It is not how He saved you that it is most important, it is that He saved you. Never under estimate the great work God has done!