

Groups of 3 Starter Kit

For a more complete description of this concept please read the book *Cultivating a Life for God*, by Neil Cole available in our church library or from ChurchSmart Resources.

A **Group of 3** "...is made up of two to three people, all of the same gender, who meet weekly for personal accountability in the areas of their spiritual growth and development." (Cole, p. 63). If this is your desire here are the basic steps to take.

Find one or two others of the same gender who want to grow spiritually and know God better. You may want to make one of the members of your group someone you don't know very well yet, but who is obviously "needy" in terms of looking for friendship, and for love from God. The addition of a person like this can make sure your meetings really matter. You will not be a social club. You will be a lifeline of hope that experiences the power of God's love. **There is no leader in the group.** As equals you will seek to help each other know God better. Being of the same gender allows for open discussion of struggles unique to men and women.

Choose a time and place for the first meeting. It can be over food in a restaurant, or coffee in a home, or anywhere you can be comfortable talking and praying together. At the first meeting remind each other that the group will have three elements:

1. **Scripture Reading**
2. **Accountability**
3. **Evangelistic Prayer**

Scripture Reading

At each meeting select a passage of Scripture that all of you will read at home before the next meeting. Make it around 25-30 chapters a week. Any less and you will not be taking in the Word in a sufficient quantity for it to work in your heart and mind. Much more and you may find it takes too long and you will give up on it. You may choose a small book like 1 John with 5 chapters and read through it once each day for 5 days. Or you may choose a section of 25 chapters from a larger book like Isaiah and read through it once by reading 4-5 chapters a day. Read Proverbs once or 2 Corinthians twice. You may mix some Psalms with a smaller book. But each week you choose the Scripture as a group. Whatever you choose, you are committing to reading all those chapters before the next meeting. Listed below are some suggestions for Scripture passages.

Matthew 5-7 (read entire passage daily)	Exodus 1-24	Psalms 1-30
Philippians (read entire passage daily)	Isaiah 40-66	Psalms 31-60
1 & 2 Thessalonians (read 3 times, 3 chapters daily)	1 John (read 5 times)	Psalms 61-90
Mark (16 chapters, read once or twice)	Acts (read once)	Psalms 91-120
Genesis 1-11 (read 2 or 3 times)	Romans (read twice)	Psalms 121-150

Here's the important point. **If one person in the group does not complete the reading assignment in full then all the members of the group will read that same passage again for the next week.** That helps everyone keep up because they know if they don't do their reading it will affect everyone else the next week. But don't look at this as a punishment. Many times group members have sensed that God wanted them to re-read those chapters again the next week – and sometimes for 3 or 4 weeks in a row until everyone finished on time. God can use the same passage to teach us important truths that we overlooked in the first reading. So don't despair if this happens to you. But at the same time do try to make a habit of finishing on time.

Each meeting share with each other what the Lord taught you from the passage(s) you read. It may be helpful to keep a diary so you can remember your thoughts from the week. Help each other see what the Lord is teaching in the passage and talk about how you can live your life in obedience to that portion of God's Word.

Accountability

The book of James reminds us that confession of sin to each other has an important place in our lives and is very effective in helping us overcome stubborn sins (James 5:16). During your meeting you will ask each other a list of accountability questions that you can come up with yourself. The following list of questions from Cole's book (p.64) is suggested as a starting list and does give you an idea of how probing the questions need to be. We want to ask questions that go to the heart of our struggles and cultivate openness in your group. Over time you might change the questions somewhat to better fit your group.

Accountability Questions

1. Have you been a testimony this week to the greatness of Jesus Christ with both your words and actions?
2. Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain inappropriate thoughts about someone who is not your spouse this week?
3. Have you lacked any integrity in your financial dealings this week, or coveted something that does not belong to you?
4. Have you been honoring, understanding and generous in your important relationships this past week?
5. Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind their back or face-to-face?
6. Have you given in to an addictive behavior this week? Explain.
7. Have you continued to remain angry toward another?
8. Have you secretly wished for another's misfortune so that you might excel?
9. Your personal accountability question _____. (Make up your own question that allows others to help you with an area you are struggling with).
10. Did you finish your reading this week and hear from the Lord? What are you going to do about it?
11. Have you been completely honest with me?

It is suggested that you put the accountability questions on a **bookmark** or a card that you can keep in your Bible. **Samples of these are available from the church office.**

Do not underestimate this powerful tool. No one likes to admit their faults, but God tells us that we are to seek humility and run from pride. Nothing helps more than accountability and confession of sin in a small group of friends who love you and will **keep the information confidential**. It should not need to be said that the information shared in these meetings must not be told to anyone else.

Evangelistic Prayer

The last element is to select two or three people for whom you feel led to pray for their salvation. Share these names with the group and write down all the names. Each person in the group should write down all the names from all the other members so that all of you will pray for these people daily when you do your Bible reading. Pray for the Lord to open their hearts to the gospel and to send someone (you?) to speak to them about Christ. The following list from Cole's book (p.69) gives ideas of ways to pray for these unsaved people.

1. Lord, I pray that you draw _____ to Yourself (John 6:44).
2. I pray that _____ seek to know You (Acts 17:27).
3. I pray that _____ hear and believe the Word of God for what it really is (1 Thess. 2:13).
4. I ask you, Lord, to prevent Satan from blinding _____ to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:25-26).
5. Holy Spirit, I ask you to convict _____ of his/her sin and need for Christ's redemption (John 16:7-14).
6. I ask that You send someone who will share the gospel with _____ (Matt. 9:37-38).
7. I also ask that you give me the opportunity, the courage and the right words to share the truth with _____ (Col. 4:3-6; Eph. 6:19-20).
8. Lord, I pray that _____ turn from his/her sin and follow Christ (Acts 17:30-31; 1 Thess. 1:9-10).
9. Lord, I pray that _____ would put all of his/her trust in Christ (John 1:12; 5:24).
10. Lord, I pray that _____ confess Christ as Lord, take root and grow in faith and bear much fruit for Your glory (Rom 10:9-10; Col 2:6-7; Luke 8:15).

Your efforts in prayer will bear fruit. God will work in the hearts of these people. God will also work in your heart to remind you to think of people you meet as either on their way to heaven or on their way to hell and in need of rescue by Jesus Christ.

So remember the three important elements (Cole, p.70).

1. Sin is confessed to one another in mutual accountability.
2. Scripture is read repetitively, in entire context and in community.
3. Souls are prayed for strategically, specifically and continuously.

Well, all that is left is to get started. So find some friends and try it out. You will not be disappointed. If you have any questions you can certainly speak with the pastors or someone already in a group. **ENJOY!**