

# Small groups: What? Why? How? Who?

## discussion guide

based on **Ephesians 4.11-16**

*This is a one-off guide which can be used at any time, but is especially relevant for the start of an academic year, or a new season in a group's life.*

Intro: What have you found most helpful about this group in the past? (Or what have you found most helpful about other small groups you've been part of in the past?)

### Read Ephesians 4.11-16

This passage speaks about unity, diversity and maturity.

What portrait of unity does this passage present?

How could your group increase in this sort of unity?

What portrait of diversity does this passage present?

How could your group increase in this sort of diversity?

What portrait of maturity does this passage present?

How could your group increase in this sort of maturity?

As a church, we've recently stated that the **aim of our small groups** (missional communities, cell groups etc) is *to help each other grow and develop to become more like Christ – ie to disciple one another*. i.e. it's to do with Christian maturity.

Is that different to what you perceived the aim of the group to be? If so, how?

Discipleship tends to be a long, slow business! That said, in what ways do you think your group has been achieving this stated aim in recent years?

As a church, we've also stated that the overall **role of small group leaders** is *to create an environment where such discipleship can happen amongst group members. Small group leaders will do this by encouraging relationships within the group which are:*

- *open and honest*
- *characterised by mutual care for each other*
- *encouraging and supportive of whole-life discipleship (ie not just interested in spiritual or church life, but also how faith in Jesus impacts on home / work / leisure time etc)*
- *willing to challenge each other when needed*

How well do you think your group has demonstrated that sort of environment recently?

What would help the group foster this sort of environment even more – and what might be your part in that?

We've also said the **key responsibilities** of the group leader are:

o *Ensuring a pattern of meeting which includes a balance of Up (Go deeper with God), In (grow closer to each other) and Out (reach further with the good news of Jesus)*

o *Hospitality*

- o Facilitate a safe space to share*
- o Encourage active listening and participation by group members*
- o Discussion and application of Scripture*
- o Prayer for each other's situation and witness*
- o Prayer for any group (collective) mission*
- o Encouraging those who are struggling to attend for whatever reason*
- o Attend termly small group leader gatherings*
- o Follow Safeguarding policy and best practice*
- o Awareness of when a group member may need additional support/advice from outside the group and who to ask for guidance.*

Which of these do you think your group does best? How might you be able to encourage other groups to improve in those areas?

Which of these are you weakest at? How might you grow in those areas? Would any help or training from outside the group be helpful for that?

If you had to write a list of responsibilities for group members, what would you include?

**Read Ephesians 4.11-16 again.**

In the light of your discussions about your group, does this passage offer you any further insight?

**Pray** Ephesians 4.11-16 for your group – and all other small groups in our church.