

AGENDA FOR SMALL GROUP MEETINGS | FOR GROUP LEADERS

SAMPLE AGENDA

Below is a sample schedule for a small group meeting. You can adjust the sections in any manner that fits your group – just remember that each element serves to meet one of the purposes we are trying to fulfill through small groups.

Try to follow a timed schedule to ensure you stay on track and maintain consistency. People appreciate knowing that they will start on time and end on time. Most groups plan meetings that last approximately 2 hours. However, if you want to start your group with a meal or separate fellowship time, plan for your meetings to go longer. Some groups are able to complete their group time in 90 minutes if their members are pressed for time. Set and adjust your group time to best meet the needs of your group interests.

- 1. Welcome & Fellowship** | 10-30 minutes
Open your meeting with a welcome and greeting time, usually incorporating snacks and a brief fellowship time.
- 2. Praise & Worship** | 5 minutes
Get everyone focused on God with a time of praise, worship, and an opening prayer.
- 3. Ice Breaker** | 5-10 minutes
Ask an ice breaker question to lighten the mood and encourage everyone to talk.
- 4. Study Time** | 30-60 minutes
Go through a study together, incorporating discussion as you go. There are many different teaching methods including study guides, reading books, video studies, attending Christian Education classes together, etc.
- 5. Prayer** | 10-15 minutes
Have a time of prayer to close out your meeting and to thank God for your time together. You can collect prayer requests and praises before praying, or this can be done at the beginning of the group time as well.
- 6. Announcements** | 5-10 minutes
Close your meeting with any necessary announcements about upcoming studies or meeting/fellowship dates, as well as information about what is going on at church.

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DETAILS OF AGENDA ELEMENTS

Welcome & Fellowship

It usually works best if you plan for fellowship before your official meeting starts. People in the group will generally want to talk and catch up with each other, especially as your group members get to know each other better, so be sure to include this in your scheduled group time. Some groups schedule 30 minutes of fellowship time at the beginning of each meeting for those who love to come and talk. Others who are more pressed for time can show up at the meeting start time and know they won't miss any of the actual study time. Any amount of time that works for your group from 10 – 30 minutes can be set aside for fellowship.

Praise & Worship

Praise and worship of God can be done in a variety of ways. Some people think of worship as music, but anything you do that expresses your reverence and adoration of God and Jesus is worship.

All group members should take part in praise and worship. Every member can share a praise each week, or the praise and worship time can be assigned to a different group member each week.

Some groups have a group member bring a devotion to read, a scripture to read, or a worship song to listen to. If your group has musical talent, feel free to sing a worship song together. Be sure that each time you are together you spend a few minutes giving glory to God for His greatness and then open each group meeting with a short prayer to get everyone's minds focused on God.

Ice Breakers

Many studies provide ice breaker questions or "get acquainted" activities that can be done before the study to encourage interaction. We also provide a list of ice breakers in your Small Group Host Bag, and on the website on the *Small Group Resource* page. An ice breaker is a wonderful way to lighten the mood and get people engaged in conversation with each other.

Study Time

Study time is where your group listens, learns, discusses, and grows deeper in their knowledge and understanding of God.

As the group host, it is not your job to teach the lesson. You can watch a study video, discuss the previous week's sermon, discuss a reading your group did over the week, or perhaps read together and discuss what you read. We do not expect the host to have more knowledge on the Bible than their group members. However, we do expect the host or whoever is facilitating the study to create a safe environment for everyone to offer their insights, thoughts, questions, and

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personal experiences related to the topic. It is through this safe exchange of conversation that everyone can grow on their spiritual journey.

If questions arise that your group cannot find the biblical answer to, please reach out to our Christian Education Team at christianeducation@gracechurchco.com and one of our pastors will help you with all of your questions.

Grace Church also offers many different resources to assist in your studies including study guides, reading books, videos, *Growing Further* discussion questions, and Christian Education classes you can attend together. Refer to the “Group Studies” section of the *Member’s Guide* for more details.

Prayer

Praying with and for your group members is an important part of your small group. At some time during your meeting, usually the beginning or the end, you should have members share prayer requests with each other so you can pray for each other during the meeting and throughout the week.

There are several methods which work well to share prayer requests:

Method 1

Go around the group and ask each member if they have current prayer needs, and each one can share. Someone in the group needs to be assigned to record all of the prayer requests, either on paper (to be typed up and shared with the group later), by typing them into a group text, writing a group email, or via the Grace Connect or LEAD attendance form, where they can be shared with everyone. You can also make sure everyone has paper and a pen so they can each make their own records of what the others need prayer for.

One drawback with this method is that if you have a large group, or if you have group members that love to elaborate on their stories, the prayer sharing time can run quite long and possibly make your group run late. If this is an ongoing problem with your group, you can try one of the methods listed below.

Method 2

Give each member of your group an index card to write on and have them write one praise for the week and up to two prayer requests. Then have everyone go around your group and read from their cards. This helps limit the number of requests that people have, as well as help keep extraneous details out of the prayer requests that are shared.

People in the group can use their cards to write down everyone else’s prayers as they are read, or someone can collect all of the cards and share the prayer requests electronically after the meeting.

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Method 3

Divide your group into sets of 2-3 people and have those smaller groups share prayer requests and pray for each other, both during the meeting and during the week. If you have couples in your groups, try to put the married people in different groups from each other. If you use this method, try to mix up the subsets of people each week.

Regardless of which method is used to share prayer requests, end your group time with a closing prayer. Be sure to thank God for your time together. You do not need to individually pray over every request shared during group, but you can make a more general appeal to God to “hear our prayers, both spoken and unspoken”. If you have time and want to pray over each individual request, of course, that is fine. If you have something very serious going on in a group member’s life, be sure to stop and pray for that individual specifically. Remember, prayer is not the least you can do for someone, it is actually the *most* you can do for someone, by giving their problems to the Creator of the universe, Who actually has the ability to solve all of our problems, if it is His will.

Announcements

Open or close your meeting with any necessary announcements about upcoming studies or fellowship dates. This is a great time to make sure your group knows what is going on at the church. Share any information about Grace Church activities that the Small Groups Director shares, or that you see or hear about in the bulletin, on our website, etc.

Communion

Once a month, once a quarter, or at the end of each study series, your group should celebrate communion together. All of the instructions to celebrate communion are in the *Small Group Member's Guide* and on the Small Group page of the Grace website under “Communion.” You can pick up supplies for communion (crackers for the bread and small cups for juice) on the *Small Group Host Resource Shelf*. This shelf is located in front of the Main Office, which is on the lower level of the larger Main Building, just across from Volunteer Central.