



Tips for Facilitating Group Discussions

After watching the video Bible study in RightNow Media, most groups will seek to have some group discussion. How long these discussions last is up to you and your group. You can purchase the facilitator's guide through RightNow Media or seek to facilitate discussion without the guide. Here are some tips for facilitating discussion during group meetings.

1. Be the facilitator, not the teacher.

- a. You may feel pressure to get rid of silence by teaching and explaining. A little silence is okay. If there is quite a bit of silence, ask the next question in the facilitator's guide or ask if anyone has other thoughts they want to share before the conversation winds down. One common complaint in small groups is that the facilitator rambles and teaches during the conversation. Feel free to share how the content impacted you, but try not to spend too much time teaching the group.

2. True connection requires sharing vulnerably.

- a. Do not expect people to share vulnerably too quickly. It takes trust and courage for many to begin to share struggles.
- b. People are struggling with sin and hurting in every group. If people rarely share real life struggles, consider how you may foster that.
 - i. Pray
 - ii. Lead by example
 - iii. Consider splitting up by gender for part of the discussion.
 - iv. When someone does disclose vulnerably, provide affirmation and appreciation.
 1. "Thanks for sharing." / "It means a lot that you would share that with us." / "That must be really difficult. I am glad you were able to share it here."
- c. Does the group feel safe and supportive?
 - i. Is "fixing" and quick and unsolicited advice common during discussions?
 1. "This is what works for me." / "Have you tried _____?" / "You should ____."
 2. When someone shares vulnerably, the next thing expressed should be appreciation, empathy, and affirmation. Seek to model this and make it the norm.
 3. Consider reading something like the following at the beginning of the discussion time:
The goals of this discussions are to foster gospel transformation and gospel-centered connection with others. We desire everyone to know and be known. This happens best when we listen to one another without trying to "fix" each other by giving quick and unsolicited advice. We want everyone to have opportunity to contribute to the conversation, so please try not to monopolize conversation or allow yourself to believe that your thoughts are not valued. Let's share our struggles and victories, ask questions and seek truth, and seek to apply what we just heard to our lives. So, ...

3. It's not all on you.

- a. A healthy group is not dependent on the host for all movement and direction. In a healthy group, the host does not feel fatigued and irritated by the burden of making everything work.
- b. The Holy Spirit transforms people, and it takes several people who value the group and contribute to make a healthy and engaging discussion.