



## **Small Group Guidelines and Expectations**

The small group leader and/or the assistant leader will be the ones facilitating the small group you are assigned to. Their role is to help create a safe environment in order for you to participate and receive. They are not miracle workers and depend on God to do the healing. They will work to facilitate opportunities for each participant to receive ministry. Although there may not be time for everyone to get prayer during every small group the leaders will work to make equal time for all throughout the duration of the program. Below is a list of expectations you will be asked to follow that create a healthy small group environment.

### **Confidentiality**

This means no sharing outside of the group unless it's about you and what is happening in your own life. Confidentiality also creates trust; trust to be able to share openly and honestly without fear. Each participant and leader have been asked to agree to and sign a Confidentiality Policy.

### **Avoid cross-talk**

An example of cross-talk is talking or commenting about what another has shared rather than opening up about your own life and struggle. Avoid any criticism, advice giving, questioning, or denial of another's pain, for it may minimize another's feelings creating an unsafe environment.

1. If a person feels criticized or judged it may hinder us from honestly sharing. Sometimes this creates shame, guilt, hopelessness and isolation hindering us from addressing our real struggles.
2. Advice: An example in a group is when we share our own experiences motivated by a desire to fix or guide someone in the group. Many times we give advice without understanding or sympathizing with where a person is in the moment. Some of us will want to spend time and energy on fixing others and this is not the purpose of the small group. Unsolicited advice is also unhealthy and can manifest as codependency.
3. The focus for the small group time is to address and work on your own issues. Focusing on others will detract you from your own healing. Even when we know the advice can be good, we may feel powerless to follow it. As a result even good advice may leave us helpless to follow it.

### **Sharing**

1. Use I statements rather than talking in the third-person, i.e.: "I do this" rather than "Sometimes people will do this." The latter creates distance from your emotions as well as distance in the group (it can be taken as giving advice).
2. Talk about yourself - not your spouse, or friends. This keeps us from shifting blame and justifying self-pity. Don't tell stories about others or break the confidence of another.
3. Do not use graphic details when sharing.

4. Don't preach about what we should think, feel or do.
5. Sharing is not meant to put anyone on the spot or require anyone to talk. If at any time you have nothing to share, or would just rather not, you are free to say so. That said, the purpose of the small group is to share, and in order to receive you will eventually need to share.
6. Do not interrupt or speak when another is speaking. The small group leader will let you know when it is your turn to share. There will be moments of silence during the small group. At those times you are encouraged to listen for the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

## **Touch**

Touch has many different meanings to people. For some, a touch on the shoulder can be comforting and affirming. For others, especially for someone who has been abused, touch, even on the shoulder, may feel invasive and cause them to shut down. For this reason, we always ask someone for their permission before touching them. When being prayed for, those praying for you may want to lay hands on your shoulders or hold your hand. If you do not want them to do so, please let them know.

## **Be Honest**

A good group is one in which there is both honesty and trust. Be who you are, not who you think you should be.

## **Be Respectful**

God is pursuing you and will often use the small group as the place in which you find Him. The small group meets on Holy ground. We purpose in the small group to go together to the Cross where we meet Christ in the often painful, broken and sinful places of our hearts. The lives that people share with you are sacred and will be treated as such.

This is a closed group, your transformation and the small group dynamic is affected when you do not show up. Do you agree to come to all sessions unless a real emergency comes up or there is something that is preplanned that cannot be rescheduled? Outside of unforeseen circumstances, you will be asked to leave LW if you miss two (2) sessions (chapters). (This means missing the Saturday counts as 2 sessions.)

## **Be Prepared**

You are expected to come prepared each week having read the current chapter and answered the questions, so that you can effectively participate in the small group. Be open to what the lesson brings up for you.

## **This time is for YOU!**

You may have come at the urging of another, due to a loved one's brokenness, or you may be here to address issues in your own life. No matter why you are here, the Lord wants to meet you in specific areas of your life. The small group is the opportune time to meet with the Lord. We encourage you to be open, honest and receptive and allow the Holy spirit to work.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS SMALL GROUP GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS POLICY, INCLUDING EXCEPTIONS, AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT. I SIGN THIS AGREEMENT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_