

Spiritual Formation Groups

"WHERE TWO OR MORE GATHER IN MY NAME, THERE I AM WITH THEM..."

Spiritual Formation Groups (SFG) are 2-3 people who commit to meeting for an hour weekly to pray, grow closer to God and one another, and commit to reading Scripture.

Overview

- Groups consistently meet for 1 hour a week. Adapt this to what is best for your group (i.e. lunch, coffee, a phone call while on a walk, meet for a walk, etc.)
- Groups are 2-3 of the same gender
- A 4th member can be added. Once they are consistent, multiply into 2 groups.
- Groups are meant to be mutually beneficial, therefore there are no official leaders.
- Three focuses of a SFG:

The Examen - Use this prayer exercise to reflect together to see God's activity in your lives.

Scripture - Commit to consistently reading large portions of God's Word in context together throughout the week and discuss it.

Prayer - Continually pray for one another specifically throughout the week

SFG's are simple, yet powerful and effective. They do not require "training" and should not be considered a program. This is a simple tool for God's people to engage in life together for the sake of maturing spiritual disciples by incorporating God's presence and God's Word into deliberate relationships through the Spirit.

How to Start a Group:

Prayerfully consider who you might ask to join you in an SFG. After prayer, contact and send them this pamphlet and ask if they would be willing to commit to meeting weekly in some capacity to grow closer to God and one another.

"AS IRON SHARPENS IRON, SO ONE PERSON SHARPENS ANOTHER."

growing closer to God and one another

Principles of Spiritual Formation Groups:

1. Groups are made of 2-3 same gender people committed to meeting or talking weekly. A 4th member can be added for a time. Once the 4th person is a regular in attending, the group should prayerfully multiply into 2 groups. These new groups would prayerfully look for a 3rd person to invite to join.
2. Groups should use the Examen prayer practice to prayerfully and confessionally reflect on God's presence and desire for their lives. The reflection questions are attached to this pamphlet.
3. Each week, the group will agree what book of the Bible (or chapters) they will read before the next meeting. The focus is on reading large portions of Scripture in context to hear what God's Word says as it is written. This is not a Bible Study but a time to listen to God's Word and share how it has challenged, brought peace, or convicted each person throughout the week. They will hold each other accountable to reading. If one member does not complete the reading, all members will read the selection again the next week so that you can discuss it as a group. As you consider selected readings, make it something that is obtainable for everyone in the group. If you have an exceptionally busy week coming up, choose a shorter reading like one of the NT letters. It is important that everyone in the group is able to do the reading during the week. Be free of judgment if someone fails to get the reading done that week. Receive this repetition of scripture as a gift to listen more deeply to what God might be saying.
4. Groups will utilize the prayer focus on the same handout as the Examen questions and share their prayer needs and the prayer needs of others before closing in prayer.
5. At some point groups will decide that it is time to invite somebody else who would be blessed by a Spiritual Formation Group. All group members must agree before extending the invitation. Groups that do not grow after six months are encouraged to discuss whether to seek new groups, take a break, or continue to grow together.

Group Meeting Outline

Prayerfully & Reflectively Examine Your Lives

PRESENCE

Starting with silence, invite God to join you and give yourselves time and space to become aware of God's presence in your midst, for where two or more gather, there he is also.

GRATITUDE

Review your last week with gratitude and share your blessings with one another.

WHERE DID I MISS GOD

Reflecting on your last week, where is somewhere that God had one thing in store for you and you missed it, rejected it, or chose something else?

WHERE DID I SEE GOD

Reflecting on your last week, where is somewhere that you witnessed God's presence or action? Where was God completely evident in your life and you joined God in that moment?

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking toward your next week, what is something that is coming up that is a potential challenge or opportunity to live into God's plan?

Discuss God's Word

Q'S FROM GOD'S WORD

Q1 - Did you read?

Q2 - From this weeks reading, what convicted, challenged, or blessed you?

Prayer Focus

YOUR PRAYER NEEDS

Each member of the group will share their prayer needs. Be sure to include thanksgivings, challenges, and any other special prayer requests.

OTHERS PRAYER NEEDS

Who are other people in your family, your life, and your church who need you to lift up their specific needs in prayer?

WHO ELSE NEEDS THIS?

Who are other individuals who could benefit from being in an SFG? Pray for them by name and ask God for guidance about whether or when or how to add them to your group or another group.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Give thanks to God for His presence, your group, our Church, and His guidance.

**GATHER WEEKLY
GROW SPIRITUALLY
BUILD FRIENDSHIPS**