

## Eleven Tips for Leading a Successful NEWLIFE Group

We encourage you to read these and review them often as a reminder for good group practice and effectiveness.

1. Remember that you are not alone. God knows everything about you, and he knew that you would be asked to lead your group. Even though you may not feel ready to lead, this is common for all good leaders. Moses, Solomon, Jeremiah or Timothy were reluctant to lead as well. But God always equips where He has called us and His many promises to, "never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." Hebrews 13:5 and give us what we need when we ask, "Call to me and I will answer you..." Jeremiah 33:3. In answering the call you will be blessed as you serve his family.
2. Don't try to do it alone. Pray right now for God to help you build a healthy group. Enlist a co-leader to help lead the group discussions and in the logistics that keep the group moving forward. When people are allowed to use their SHAPE within the group they will feel valued and everyone benefits. If they do not know what their SHAPE is, consider doing the SHAPE analysis study as a group and then encourage them to start using their unique shape for the Kingdom.
3. Just be yourself. We are all uniquely created in the image of God. We don't have to try to be more than we are. God has he equipped us for where he has placed us; and our homes, our work and our church. We don't have to try to model how others lead, do what fits your style and make up. As leaders, we don't have to have all the answers, as a group we can help each other discover them.
4. Prepare for your meeting ahead of time. Review the session and the leader's notes and write down your responses to each question. Pay special attention to exercises in the lesson that ask group members to do things beyond filling in the blanks. These help your group take the next steps in their faith journey.
5. In between meetings and before you begin your session, pray for each member by name. Encourage the group to be praying for one another and keep people up to date, when necessary of new developments through email or calls. This helps keep everyone up to speed and saves time during the meeting so more time can be spent on prayer. Expect God to lead you to whomever he wants you to encourage or challenge in a special way. Have someone keep a prayer journal and review it periodically to see how God has been working and growing us.
6. When you ask a question, be patient. Someone will eventually respond. Give them time to process and collect their thoughts. Silence isn't a bad thing, our calm presence, in the silence will ease others.
7. Provide transitions in between questions. When guiding the discussion read aloud the transitional paragraphs that lead to the questions. Have the whole group share in passage readings. Don't call on anyone, but ask for volunteers. Be sure to thank people when they participate or provide good insights to the discussion.
8. If your group is larger than eight people, it can be helpful to break into smaller groups for certain discussions or prayer times. This gives more people time to share. This is ideal for people who tend not to share much during group discussions.
9. Hospitality is a gift that welcomes people in and makes them feel comfortable and at ease. Having a room that is has a warm atmosphere is very helpful for people to get comfortable and open up. This can range from the temperature in the room, lighting, and seating, etc.

10. Create a covenant with your group. It is very important for people to understand what the expectations are and what people are looking for in a group. This usually covers things like commitment of their time, making group meetings a priority and other things that cover group dynamics and confidentiality. Ask the question, "What are they looking for in a group?"

11. Ending on time is also very important. At times, we have to direct the group to the next phase of the meeting or your time could get eaten up without having covered important discussions, sharing and prayer. These are important ways for us to grow. As your group becomes closer and shares more, this can be a bad practice to fall into and can be a source of frustration for those who also are there to learn and be disciplined in addition to the fellowship. Of course, we have to be sensitive to the spirit and not put a lesson before a deep need that might be shared in the group. That is a time to gather around and support that person in need and prayer.