

Short-Term Small Groups

A “short-term small group” meets weekly for sharing, encouragement, discussion, and prayer. In Hebrews 3:13, where we are told to “encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:13). These groups are one way we seek to live that out.

1. **Purpose** – In a time where we are separated from each other physically, it is more important than ever to have ways to “encourage one another daily.”
2. **Time and duration** – one-hour weekly for 5 weeks (with an option to extend at the end). Time of week to be determined by the group.
3. **Frequently Asked Questions:**
 - a. **How many** people should I invite into a group? It’s up to you, of course, but we recommend between 3-6 at the very most, so each person has time to share.
 - b. **Whom should I invite?** Again, that’s up to you. Here are some ideas:
 - i. First, decide whether it would be most helpful to have a group of people the same gender, or if you want to do this with one or two other couples.
 - ii. Think of your circles at Hope (Campus Community, people with whom you volunteer, people you talk to in the lobby, people you met recently, etc.)
 - iii. Even better than that, it would be great if you could think of people who aren’t very connected at Hope. This is a great way for them to make some connections! If you can’t think of anyone who isn’t connected, though, you can go with those who are, or see below.
 - iv. If you would like ideas, reach out to the following people:
 1. Bill Craig (Pastor for Adult Discipleship) – bcraig@hopemason.org
 2. Margaret Kim (Ministry to Women) – mkim@hopemason.org
 3. Paul Niehaus (Ministry to Men) – men@hopemason.org
 - c. **What do we talk about? Is there a curriculum?** You guessed it! It’s up to you. We do have a proposal, though, of a schedule, as well as proposed questions for each section:
Sample Format:
 1. Icebreaker question (10 mins)
 2. Check-in question (15 mins)
 3. Sermon discussion question (1 or 2) – (20 mins)
 4. Prayer requests and prayer – (15 mins)
 - d. **Do I need to tell anybody I’m doing this?** Nope. But we sure would love to hear that you’re doing it! If you’re willing, please reach out to one of the staff listed above.
4. **Recommendations:**
 - a. Make a point to ensure that sharing time is close to equal between members of the group (set a timer if it’s helpful).
 - b. Give priority to personal sharing. If people are struggling, give them time to share. Listen well. Be willing to ditch the rest of the agenda.
 - c. We encourage you to seek to honor God, each other, and others outside the group by **avoiding:**
 - i. Getting political (how you feel government is, isn’t, or should be handling situation)
 - ii. Being critical of each other or others (what people are or aren’t doing, etc.)
 - iii. Giving advice
 - iv. Trying to fix someone’s problem
 - v. Hijacking the conversation. Make it your primary goal to listen well and understand the others in your group! If someone is sharing a story or how they’re feeling, don’t jump in and share your own story or feelings. Listen well to them first. Your turn will come.
 - d. Enjoy! Have some fun, laugh together. One of God’s greatest gifts is His family! Enjoy that!
 - e. Make it a goal to reach out to at least one of the others in the group once during the week. A simple text message of a word of encouragement or prayer goes a long way!

Possible Small Group Questions

Icebreaker “Get To Know You” Question (choose 1) – Take turns choosing the opening question

1. What’s the best vacation you’ve ever been on (or what’s the one you *want* to go on)?
2. Who was your favorite superhero (or favorite toy) growing up?
3. As a kid what did you want to grow up to be?
4. If you could go anywhere in the world for 2 weeks (expenses paid), where would you go, with whom, and why?
5. If you had four hours free on a Saturday how would you want to spend it?
6. If you could change your occupation, what would you do (if retired, what would you have done)?
7. What is one thing on your “bucket list” (things you want to do before you die)?
8. If you could eliminate one limitation or weakness in your life, what would it be?
9. What’s the worst job you ever had?
10. What is your most treasured material possession?
11. What’s a favorite movie and why?
12. What was your first car? Describe it. (How did you get it? How long did you have it? Did you like it?)
13. What do you listen to in the car?
14. What is (was?) your favorite sport to play (or hobby)? Watch on TV?
15. Do you have a favorite current or past TV show? What did you like about it?
16. Are you a planner or a “go with the flow” kind of person? What do you like and not like about that quality?
17. Do you have a favorite, “go-to” restaurant or type of food?
18. What was the best time of your life and why?
19. Where do you fall in birth order in your family and how do you think that has affected you?
20. What are 3 of the most important things we can know about you?
21. Share as much of your life story as you can in two minutes (take turns being timekeeper).

Check-In Question (choose 1 or 2 at most)

22. What is bringing you the greatest joy in your life right now?
23. The greatest stress/sorrow? How do you tend to deal with stress (either in helpful or unhelpful ways)?
24. Where have you seen God at work in or around you this week?
25. When have you most felt God’s presence this past week? When did it most feel like He was absent?
26. What was a highlight moment of your last couple of weeks?
27. What have you been the most anxious about this week, and why?
28. What is one way you have failed to love people in your life this past week? (Confess that to the Lord, then receive His grace, and have the others pray for you, that God would help you love better.)
29. On a scale of 1-10, how strong is your desire right now to grow in your walk with Jesus (1 being no desire, 10 being total passion)? Why do you think that is? What might help you grow in that desire?
30. What do you think God most wants to say to you right now?
31. What is one of the bigger faith questions you have right now?

Sermon Discussion Questions – Go to Hope’s website, click on “Sunday Services Online.” Find the sermon video for this past Sunday (or click on this link: <https://hopechurch.aspireonemedia.com/2002>). Below the video, look for the words “Sermon Questions.” Choose one or two questions to discuss.

Prayer – ideas for requests

32. If Jesus asked you today, “What do you want me to do for you?” what would you say? Pray according to each person’s answer to that question.
33. How do you sense God may want to show His glory through you this week? Pray for each other.
34. What is one way that you would like to see God’s reign extend in your life this week? Pray that for each other.
35. Who is “outside the faith but inside your reach”? How might God want to use you this week to be a light for Him to that person? Ask prayer for that person, and for yourself, that He would lead you and use you.
36. What is a temptation you’ll face this week and how can I pray for you?
37. If your primary prayer request is for another person in your life (someone you love who is ill, etc.), share that, but then tell the others how they can pray for *you* (peace, wisdom to know how to love that person well, etc.).