

# THE SMALL GROUP MINISTRY PROGRAM AT NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How often will the groups meet?

A. Groups will meet twice a month for the four introductory sessions. After that, they will meet once a month unless the group unanimously decides to meet more often.

Q. What is the time commitment for group members?

A. We encourage participants to commit to staying with their group for at least a year.

Q. Is it okay to miss meetings?

A. Attending regularly is so important that we make promising to do so part of our group covenant. A member's absence has a significant impact on the group and greatly diminishes his/her small group ministry experience. Although we recognize that sometimes absence is unavoidable, we strongly encourage participants to choose a meeting time when they have no other commitments.

Q. How can I move to a different group?

A. We will try to accommodate moves for reasons like unexpected schedule changes, but it's preferable that participants wait until the open enrollment period to make such changes. If you do feel that you need to change groups at another time, contact the small group ministry task force.

Q. What do you mean by open enrollment?

A. There will be an open enrollment period once a year, in the Fall. While you may join a group at any time, open enrollment is when we will be starting new groups and will make every effort to insure that there is a group for everyone who wants to be part of the small group ministry program. It is also a time for members to choose to recommit to their current group, ask to be moved to another group, or decide to leave the SGM program for a while.

Q. Will what I say in a small group ministry meeting be kept confidential?

A. The hope is that the topic discussions will extend beyond the individual groups to the church as a whole, since all groups will be discussing the same topics

at the same time. However, it is important for all participants to adhere to their group's covenant regarding confidentiality. When discussing what took place at meetings, participants are encouraged to talk about their own experiences or the discussion in general, but not to use the names of others within their group. When a member shares something within the group, he/she may ask that what's being said be kept confidential. As always, appropriate intimacy is important – only share what you're comfortable sharing.

Q. Can couples be in the same group?

A. Unless a couple asks to be together, we will put them in separate groups.

Q. Will any groups be meeting during the day?

A. Yes. We will have facilitators whose schedules are such that they can be part of a daytime group. When you sign up, make sure you indicate when you would like to meet.

Q. Are groups formed solely on when people/facilitators are available to meet?

A. As we start our small group ministry program, schedule has been the main factor in determining group membership. As our program evolves, we'd also like to form affinity groups.

Q. What is an affinity group?

A. The small group ministry program provides an ongoing opportunity for us to explore life issues in a religious context. Affinity groups are groups whose members share either a common interest (e.g. writing) or a common life situation (e.g. young adulthood) and whose members would like to explore these spiritual issues with others with a similar perspective.

Q. Who's the one to talk to if I have any feedback or questions about the small group ministry program?

A. Our senior minister, Jim Nelson, or any member of the small group ministry task force will be very happy to receive suggestions about how to make our program more effective. (Task Force Members: Frank Colcord, Bob Holmes, Jonathan Lubin, Peggy Painton, Gillian Symonds, Celia Ward, Jane Zamanzadeh)

Q. How do I sign up for a small group?

A. Sign up sheets for small groups are on the Welcome Table. When you sign up, please let us know when you're available, if you have any special needs, or if you'd like to be part of an affinity group.