

lifegroups

GROUND RULES OF A LIFE GROUP

Share feelings as feelings, not fact – We’ve all been around someone who things all their opinions are facts: “Harry Potter is from the devil!” “We all know that Christians should vote Republican.” You might feel that way but that doesn’t make it a fact. Stating your opinion like it is fact not only makes you look bad, it can also shut down the lines of communication in a group. So as you share, be careful to share feelings as feelings and not fact.

Agree to respectfully disagree – There are times in a Life Group that we will disagree with one another. That is a healthy part of community. This ground rule reminds us that it’s okay to disagree, as long as we do so in a respectful way. This is not a healthy response: “WHATEVER, JERK, AGREE TO DISAGREE!” The key word in this ground rule is *respectfully*.

Feedback is essential and welcome – If you’re upset about something or see that something needs to be addressed, give that feedback to the right person so they can do something about it. The Life Group cannot improve if you don’t each give feedback to the right people at the right time.

Permission to interrupt please – Let’s just say it – some people are talkers. And one person talking too much kills a group’s momentum. So don’t be upset if we interrupt and cut you off. “Hey, motor mouth! It is someone else’s turn to talk.” “Hey, tangent man! Sorry to cut you off but we need to get back on track!” (Okay, maybe not so harshly but you get the point.)

Confidentiality is mandatory – What is said in the Life Group stays in the Life Group. There is no way to create a setting where people can be honest about their struggles if they are afraid someone will talk about it later. The only time confidentiality can be broken is when someone is a danger to themselves or someone else.

Confrontation required – Our natural tendency is to avoid conflict; however, it is a vital part of developing authentic relationships. Many times our avoidance of conflict is a sign of our own selfishness. A friend who continues to watch his friend struggle with alcohol and says nothing is basically saying, “I don’t love you enough to point out that sinful behavior and help you stop it.”

Deal with conflict right away and face-to-face – Ephesians 4.26 says, “Don’t let the sun go down while you are still angry.” In other words, don’t sweep things under the rug. Deal with them, and do it right away. And *DON’T DO CONFLICT OVER EMAIL!* Phone conversations are at times acceptable, but face-to-face is always best. It’s not easy, but it’s the only path to authentic community.

