

How to Organize and Facilitate a Christ-Centered Support Group

1. The first thing is to find a few others who will commit themselves to a Christ-Centered recovery group. We need to pray and seek specifically God's will in this matter. We don't want to be meeting alone. Certainly not without God.
2. Recovery in Christ ministries started when a few people from an AA meeting met afterwards at a local restaurant ...
3. When we set up a Christ-Centered Recovery Group we are not competing with or criticizing any other group.
4. We are simply creating an environment where Christians in need of recovery can gather and freely talk about Jesus and the Bible without concern of offending others.
5. It may be best to find space in a church where the pastor is supportive and understanding of the 12 steps.
6. The pastor can give spiritual covering in addition to referring people to the group who through counseling has found them hurting and in need of help.
7. Small Groups have an important role in the body of Christ. It is difficult for intimate fellowship to take place in large Bible study or congregational meetings. The support group is a gathering of equals who come together to love, encourage and minister to one another.
8. (James 5:16 KJV) Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.
9. A Christ-Centered Group gives the opportunity for this to happen. When we gather together with others who understand us we can get rid of the guilt from the past with reasonable assurance that we will not be judged or condemned.
10. Small groups also give us an opportunity to share what is going on in our lives in a confidential setting. If we never get a chance to share

- who we really are with others on a “gut” level, we can never be truly loved. They can only love who we are pretending to be or what they perceive.
11. We will forever be in bondage if we don't learn how to be transparent and accountable to one another. (John 8:32 KJV) And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. As we share, listen and identify with each other, God brings us through denial. “God is truth and God is love”. As we share the truth in love we are imparting God one to another.
 12. In establishing a support group it is important to be consistent. Make sure someone is there to start the meeting on time – every time.
 13. Get a good foundation by inviting people who have a good attitude and have the courage to be honest. It might be wise to stay away from those who simply want to play church and impress others with their personal “holiness” or ability to quote Scripture at length.
 14. Some people are fearful of attending meetings at their own church out of concern others may gossip. It is important to insure anonymity and confidentiality.

Facilitating a Healthy Christ-Centered Support Group

There are a number of suggestions in how to maintain a healthy Christ-centered support group. One of the first should be to pray for God's presence, the grace of Jesus Christ and the leading of the Holy Spirit. A little common sense won't hurt much either. Here are some other suggestions:

1. Honestly share our experience, strength and hope.
2. Avoid cross talk – cross talk is where two or more engage in a conversation during group to the exclusion of all others – those left out could feel rejected – rejection is a terrible thing.

3. All members should be participants by sharing and listening. Those who refuse to share in meetings might not be sufficiently motivated toward recovery.
4. Use I messages instead of You messages whenever possible
5. Talk only about those who present (mainly ourselves). We can only be helpful to those who are present when the group meets
6. Let other people speak for themselves. It is not necessary to defend other members of the group.
7. Don't counsel or give advice. Recovering people don't like being told what to do. We listen to others share and apply to our lives what we can identify will work for us.
8. Don't preach. This is a fellowship not a dictatorship. Few things are more irritating than one all knowing person telling everybody what to do. In this setting, if we preach we elevate ourselves above others, which goes against the importance of a fellowship setting.
9. Don't monopolize – time spent in the group is precious. Be considerate and realize that none of us has all the answers.
10. Avoid Profanity – coarse talk has no place in a Christ-centered group – it often just serves as an excuse for some people not to attend.
11. Attend meetings with a good attitude – with a sense of expectancy that God will speak through someone to help that specific thing we are concerned about. The Lord will often speak to us through the least likely person.
12. Maintain confidentiality – what ever is said in the group – stays in the group – “Who you see here and what is said here – stays here. Here, here.”

13. Freely talk about Scripture - It is ok to freely talk about Scripture that is meaningful to us. We should certainly share what Jesus has been doing in our lives in a Christ-centered meeting.

The Recovery In Christ Work Book which accompanies this DVD series has a meeting format which can help in coordinating a meeting.

It has all the readings and meeting guidelines laid-out for easy reading. This is a suggested meeting format:

(suggested)

MEETING FORMAT

- 1. Opening Prayer (praise & worship - depending on group)**
- 2. Read Opening Group Statement and/or Ground Rules**
- 3. Read the Twelve Steps**
- 4. Introduce and welcome new members (first name only)**
- 5. Announcements**
- 6. Pass around phone list (optional)**
- 7. Introduce Topic:**

A. Step/Study

B. Open Discussion

C. Special Topic

D. Review Special Recovery Material

E. Speakers Meeting

F. Teaching

8. Prayer Requests

9. Closing Prayer

10. Coffee Break and Fellowship

In addition you can use these DVD's to help stimulate discussion in meetings. One way of using them would be to play a half hour DVD segment on one of the steps followed by a half hour group discussion.

There are many Christian recovery resources that can be used in meetings for study and to stimulate discussion.

I asked some of the other Christian recovery leaders to share what their favorite Scripture verse was – this is what they had to say: