

Tips on Enhancing Your Meetings

Here are some great tips passed on by participants in the Spring 2003 Leadership Training Program. As part of their training they are asked to visit other small flock groups to get ideas on how others are run. Here is a summary of what they shared.

- A. **Include the children in worship time:** We enjoyed having the children & adults sing and worship together at the beginning of the session in the group we visited. After their participation they went off to another area of the house with a hired sitter.
- B. **Begin with a time of worship:** We enjoyed singing together from a hymn sheet provided by the co-leader. A folder of hymns was provided with copies for all to use as we raise our voices in song and prepare our hearts and minds for our application discussion.
- C. **Serve communion:** We shared communion together in the group we visit, and it was a very meaningful time in the intimacy of the small group gathering. When we consider Acts 2:42-47, this is what the early body of believers did as they gathered together in each others homes.
- D. **Pray before you begin your application discussion:** We noticed a contrast when prayer was included. One group we visited preceded application discussion with prayer, while the other went right from social interacting into discussion without prayer. There was a noticeable difference in outcome. What a testimony to the power of prayer. "Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith..." Hebrews 10:22 (NIV)
- E. **Balance theology with practical application:** We liked the balance of discussing the theological aspects of the scriptures with sharing how others applied God's word to their lives.
- F. **Be flexible with your time:** I noticed the leader being flexible in allowing a couple more time for in-depth sharing during prayer time. I visited with that couple this morning after service and it was a very meaningful time of encouraging one another.
- G. **Conduct periodic evaluations:** We saw the value of conducting periodic evaluations during the 12-month period to review progress and make appropriate adjustments in response from the group. The group was transformed with much greater participation and openness to become more transparent. Suggest doing so every 6 months rather than annually.
- H. **Vary your prayer time:** The group we visited broke out into gender groups during their prayer time. We found it to be very meaningful as in-depth needs were shared and prayers seemed to overflow from opened hearts. They do this ever now and then as the Lord leads.
- I. **Draw quiet people out in your prayer time:** In one group, they observed some people not participating in prayer time and learned that they hardly ever do. The training group brainstormed ways of encouraging "quiet people" during prayer time. Suggestions generated included, "Ask them to pray for a specific request of another, ask them to close prayer time with a simple, 'Thank you Lord for this time together', have group prayer using scriptures, and limit prayer to short sentences."