



Week Two – Connect Groups

The goal of today's discussion is to discover the value of being a part of a Connect Group and how to get the most out of being a part of one.

CONNECT

Remember that you want to keep your Connect Group meeting to one hour. If people are enjoying one another and have the time, they can always stick around after. However, if you consistently have long meetings, some will be unable to attend or opt not to attend simply because they can't afford the time. For this reason we recommend normally using just one 'Connect' question. Remember that the goal is to get everyone involved and feeling welcome and included.

- Who do you enjoy hanging out with and why?
- Do you prefer large crowds, small groups, or one-on-one interactions? Why?
- What is the best group of people you have ever been a part of? What made the group or your relationships in it so special?

WORD

"²³Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. ²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:23–25 (NIV)

THOUGHT

During his life on earth, Jesus spent time with large crowds of people, with individuals, and with small groups of people, but he spent the bulk of his time and is most closely identified with the 12 men who were known as his disciples. The success of Jesus' strategy can be seen in the worldwide proliferation of the church 2000 years after his death. The early church in the book of Acts, although numbering in the thousands, continued on this strategy of meeting in small groups, most often in homes. Here at ENNYC we call these groups, 'Connect Groups' and they form the backbone of our church and the 'relational space' where we can live out the Christian life as it was meant to be lived. In today's study, we'll discuss how this takes place.

DISCUSSION

1. The phrase 'quality time' became popular in the 1970's. As people became busier, they saw quality time as a way to make up for the lack of time spent on important relationships. How would you describe 'quality time'?

No right or wrong answers here, just opinions. The goal would be to come away with the conclusion that time spent with other people can be beneficial or a waste of time. This question can act as an opening 'Connect' question if you are pressed for time.

2. Which is more important in building a relationship, "Quality Time" or "Quantity Time"?

Again, no right or wrong answers. Hopefully your group will come to the conclusion that both are important but it is okay if they don't.

3. In the verses we read earlier, the writer of the Hebrews seems to emphasize "Quantity Time" when he encourages us toward "*not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing*". What happens when people are inconsistent in showing up when your group gets together?

The goal of this question is to help people feel like they are important to the group and it makes a difference when people don't show up for a meeting. It robs them and it robs the rest of the group.

4. The writer of the Hebrews gives equal value to “Quality Time”

when he states that we should ‘encourage one another’. What are some ways we can encourage one another in this group?

5. The writer of the Hebrews encourages us to ‘consider how we can spur one another on towards love and good deeds’. Let’s take some to ‘consider’. What are some ways we can show love? What are some good deeds we can do? How can we ‘spur one another on’ in these areas?

Be sure to make note of the suggestions given and to attempt to integrate them in the coming weeks. You might even assign someone to lead that effort.

6. Our normal human nature tends towards selfishness and exclusivity. Jesus was an example of someone who lived a life of love and good deeds and inspired many others to do the same. How can we as a group show love and do good deeds to those outside of our group?

This is probably the best question to try and work the Gospel in if you have unsaved attendees. You can explain the selflessness of Jesus’ choice to leave heaven and the fellowship of the Father and Holy Spirit, to come to earth in order to address sin and the effects of sin in us. You can then relate that to the group making the effort to go help others.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

- What steps can you take to make sure you consistently attend your Connect Group meetings?
- Think of someone in your group who you think needs to be encouraged. How can you encourage them this week?
- Think of someone you know who needs the kind of community your Connect Group shares. Make plans to invite them this week to attend your next Connect Group meeting.

PRAYER

- Ask God to grow the relationships and commitment to each other in the Connect Group.
- Take time this week to pray for the others in your Connect Group.
- Ask God to show you 1-3 people who need to be in a Connect Group and to give you an opportunity to encourage them to join a group, perhaps to even invite them to join your group.

NOTES
