

## The small group contents

There are hundreds of different approaches to how we guide our group leaders in the content of their weekly small group gatherings.

Here is our current approach. This is what we instruct our small group leaders to do...

- 1) *Be sure to 'audit' your home group using 'the love audit exercise' at the end of this document.*
  - a. Your main job as a home group leader is to help your whole group grow as disciples of Jesus - which means practically to **'aim at love (for God), love (for each other) and love (for those beyond)'**. And each of these three loves are made up of five expressions. By getting everyone in your group to audit themselves, you will have a stronger idea of the weak areas to focus on in the year ahead.
- 2) *Remember that each home group gathering should typically consist of three main components:*
  - a. A bonding time (usually with food / snacks) *where people get into each other's lives.*
  - b. A life-shaping conversation *where people get into God's Word, and especially speak about how to apply it to life.*
  - c. A prayer encounter *where people get into God's Presence.*
- 3) *Regarding the content of 'the life-shaping conversation' for each week we recommend a three-phase cycle:*
  - a. Phase One: 2-4 weeks of **focusing on the Sunday Message** using the e-loop message summary and group discussions ideas as a resource. It is useful to delegate to a different person each week the job of taking good notes and giving a 3-minute summary of the message in the home group as a memory refresher.
  - b. Phase Two: 3-6 weeks of **going through one of our selected books of the Bible** (along with commentary and Group Guide). Regularly visit [www.friends-first.com](http://www.friends-first.com) and click on 'free resources' and then on 'exploring the Bible' for what's available. Perhaps start with Esther. Then next do Mark, part 1.
  - c. Phase Three: 2-4 weeks of focusing on one of the **weaker fifteen expressions of love** (based on the audit on the next page, mentioned in point 2 above). It just makes so much sense to focus on those areas where your group seem to be weakest in their obedience to Christ. The main idea resource for how to do this is found in appendix 1 (Ideas for deepening love) of the Small Group Leadership Manual (also available on our website).
  - d. However, be willing to push pause for a week on Phase Two or Three when the Sunday morning message warrants immediate attention and emphasis as a group.

## A love-audit exercise

Jesus' vision for our lives is that we would grow as all-rounded disciples. The essence of this discipleship is love: love for God, love for each other, and love for 'those beyond'. And each of these three loves has at least five expressions - all of which we need to be growing in. Use this to audit yourself and your group. Celebrate your strengths, and seek God for passion and help in those expressions of love where you or your group are weak.

In each block RATE yourself 1,2 or 3.  
1 = hardly present. 2 = present but not growing. 3 = growing

*We express and deepen our love for God by getting in SHAPE...*

<i>Aspects of loving God</i>	<i>How am I doing?</i>	<i>How is my group doing?</i>
Savour God, Christ and grace		
Hunger after the Spirit's presence, power, gifts etc		
Absorb and apply the Scriptures ( <i>personal study of Word</i> )		
Pray to and worship the Father		
Express Christ's character ( <i>in generosity, purity, humility, honesty, speech, godliness</i> )		

*We express and deepen our love for each other by getting in a GROUP...*

<i>Aspects of loving each other</i>	<i>How am I doing?</i>	<i>How is my group doing?</i>
Grow your revelation of community		
Regularly eat, laugh and spend time together		
Offer grace, encouragement and vulnerability		
Understand, care for and help each other		
Partner together in loving God and those beyond		

*We express and deepen our love for those beyond by getting ready to BLESS...*

<i>Aspects of loving those beyond</i>	<i>How am I doing?</i>	<i>How is my group doing?</i>
Build up the body ( <i>ie giving, serving, praying</i> )		
Live for the lost ( <i>ie seeking to reach people for Christ</i> )		
Extend to the ends ( <i>ie going on short-term mission trip</i> )		
Serve those who suffer ( <i>think of social impact ministries</i> )		
Salt and light all of life and society ( <i>through your work</i> )		