

## **GROUND RULES:**

Establishing ground rules is a useful practice for group sharing for two main reasons. First, they re-enforce that this is a safe place. Second, they set the tone for the group - there is an expectation that this discussion is meant to be personal and each member is challenged to share at a deeper level from their heart.

**Transparency:** It's difficult to love someone as God called us to do without really knowing them in a deep and meaningful way. We're going to encourage you to share from your heart - to let down your walls, so that others can really know you. This isn't just struggles and fears, but also the positives - dreams, hopes, answered prayers, etc. We understand that's easier for some and we'll respect your boundaries.

**No Convincing:** Share your opinions - a difference in opinion is welcome. However, please don't try to convince others to your way of thinking.

**Listen:** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Hear what's being said - don't be thinking about what you're going to say next or how you're going to respond - really listen. Be aware of how much you are talking - we want to give everyone a chance to share in the group.

**Pause:** After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what was just shared and to fully consider it before the next person shares. This also provides the person sharing with the opportunity to continue with their thought without feeling rushed.

**Don't Fix:** Let's try to hear what people are sharing without trying to fix them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it. (It's okay to ask permission to enter in.)

**Don't Rescue:** When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

**No "Cross-talk":** Be considerate of others as they are sharing - don't be having side conversations.

**Focus on yourself:** This is the one time that it is kind of all about you. What we mean is simply this: it's easy to talk about the issues of the church or other people on your team, but for our purposes, we want you to point the finger back at yourself. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

**Self-assess & self-reflect:** It's important that we all use this time to consider where we're at on any given subject or issue and what God would have us do. How am I walking this out in my personal life? How does this affect my ability to lead others? What is my part of the issue and/or solution? What changes does God want me to make?