

GUIDE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY GROUPS

PURPOSE

“As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.” – Proverbs 27:17

Christian accountability groups exist for the purpose sharpening our “blunt edges” so that we look more and more like Christ in character and conduct.

Christian accountability groups are **NOT** meant to be a system of punishment or being kept “in-check.” They are for building up and encouraging one another to grow in Christ-likeness. Sometimes accountability groups can carry the connotation of being places where we’re required to share our deepest darkest sins and then uphold to high moral standards. This can result in fear becoming the driving factor and motivation for accountability.

“But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment.” – 1 John 4:18

Accountability groups should always be operating out of the perfect love of Christ. Holding each other accountable when we have moral or personal failures is not simply to keep in line with moral standards or codes but for wanting to look more like Jesus and live into the righteousness that he has already bestowed upon us. Accountability should not be rooted in a sense of indebtedness and guilt but out of sheer obedience and love for Christ and wanting to help others to do the same. The process of sharpening and growth can be painful which is why it is so vital that accountability relationships are built on love and encouragement rather than judgment, condemnation, and rebuke.

FINDING A PARTNER/ GROUP

It is often easiest to simply ask a friend or someone you know well to do this with you, but the goal of accountability groups is not necessarily to find friends or become better friends. Of course, that doesn’t mean it can’t or shouldn’t happen but it’s more important to find someone who has a shared desire of wanting to “sharpen” others and be “sharpened” in their pursuit of Christ-likeness.

Suggested size of groups is 2-4. You’re encouraged to find your own partner/group.

Timeframe

We suggest being intentional about how long you will meet, ie. frequency, length of meeting, and end date. Doing so sets the clear expectation that this for a set season in each of your lives and allows for more feasible goals and expectations to be met. A suggested timeframe: One, hour long meeting every week for 12 weeks.

Ground Rules

Establish ground rules to create a safe environment for everyone. A few examples are below:

1. Be honest
2. Be respectful
3. Be committed
4. Be teachable
5. Be humble
6. Be quick to listen and slow to speak, slow to get angry

GOAL

What is the goal of your group? The goal is to come away looking more like Christ but given the agreed upon timeframe that your group will meet, what are you hoping for? Think about this and share with your group the first time you meet and set reachable goals i.e. I want to be having more consistent times of prayer by the end of the x number of weeks.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU MEET

Initial Meeting

1. Open with prayer
 2. Discuss and agree upon timeframe, ground rules, goals/hopes
- a. If there are specific areas that each person is seeking accountability in (ie. spiritual disciplines, finances, relationships, etc.) take note and make sure to hit those areas when you meet.
3. Write everything down and create a covenant agreement for each member to sign.
 4. Pray together and commit yourselves to God and one another to growing in Christlikeness.

Subsequent Meetings

1. Open with prayer
2. Seek to answer the question “how goes your walk?”
 - a. For a list of more specific questions you might ask at each meeting, see appendix below. After each person answers a question, be slow to correct, rebuke or offer advice unless they immediately ask for it or you have preexisting relationship and comfortability and it will be received well. Acknowledge any areas of failure and seek to encourage one another.
3. Pray for each other

The following 11 lists of questions are questions your group may choose to discuss one of these lists at each meeting or you may put together your own list by choosing from among these questions or you may develop your own questions.

A. These are questions from John Wesley for accountability groups:

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass onto another what was told me in confidence?
4. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
5. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
6. Did the Bible live in me today?
7. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
8. Am I enjoying prayer?
9. When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
10. Do I pray about the money I spend?
11. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
12. Do I disobey God in anything?
13. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
14. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
15. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
16. How do I spend my spare time?
17. Am I proud?
18. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisee who despised the publican?
19. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward or disregard? If so, what am I going to do about it?
20. Do I grumble and complain constantly?
21. Is Christ real to me?

B. Meeting Questions:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?
2. What temptations have you met with?
3. How were you delivered?
4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?
5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?

C. Other Accountability Questions:

1. Have you been with a woman anywhere this past week that might be seen as compromising?
2. Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
3. Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
4. Have you spent adequate time in Bible study and prayer?
5. Have you given priority time to your family?
6. Have you fulfilled the mandates of your calling?
7. Have you just lied to me?

D. Spiritual Discipline Questions:

1. In what ways did God make his presence known to you since our last meeting? What experiences of prayer, meditation and spiritual reading has God given you? What difficulties or frustrations did you encounter? What joys or delights?
2. What temptations did you face since our last meeting? how did you respond? Which spiritual disciplines did God use to lead you further into holiness of heart and life?
3. Have you sensed any influence or work of the Holy Spirit since our last meeting? What spiritual gifts did the Spirit enable you to exercise? What was the outcome? What fruit of the Spirit would you like to see increase in your life? What disciplines might be useful in this effort?
4. What opportunities did God give you to serve others since our last meeting? How did you respond? Did you encounter injustice to our oppression of others? Were you able to work for justice and shalom?
5. In what ways did you encounter Christ in your reading of the Scripture since our last meeting? How has the Bible shaped the way you think and live? Did God provide an opportunity for you to share your faith with someone? How did you respond?

E. Simplified list of accountability questions:

1. How have you experienced God in your life this week?
2. What is God teaching you?
3. How are you responding to His prompting?
4. Do you have a need to confess any sin?
5. How did you do with your reading this week?

F. Alter adaptation of accountability questions:

1. Did I invest the proper quality/quantity of time in my most important relationships?
 2. Did my life reflect verbal integrity?
 3. Did I express a forgiving attitude toward others?
 4. Did I practice undisciplined or addictive behavior?
 5. Was I honorable in my financial dealings?
 6. Was I sexually pure?
 7. Did I spend time with the Lord this week, completing the Bible reading for the week?
8. Did I pray for my pre-Christian friends? Did I talk with someone about Christ?

G. Scriptural/spiritual questions:

1. What have the Scriptures revealed in your life this week: - In terms of specific sinful behavior? - In terms of specific sinful thoughts? - In terms of specific sinful words?
2. What errors or lies that you once believed have now been corrected by your reading of the Scriptures?
3. What encouragement have the Scriptures given you in your daily walk?
4. What do you need to ask the Spirit of God to reveal to you that you

have not yet understood?

H. More specific question:

1. What is the condition of your soul?
2. What sin do you need to confess?
3. What have you held back from God that you need to surrender?
4. Is there anything that has dampened your zeal for Christ?
5. Who have you talked with about Christ this week?

I. Missional accountability questions:

1. How have you sensed God's presence in your life during this past week?
2. Have you received a specific answer to your prayers? What was it?
3. Have you spoken with a non-believer about your faith in Jesus Christ? With whom?
4. To whom have you shown God's love during this past week?
5. What have you learned about God in your personal Bible reading this past week?
6. As a result of your Bible reading this past week, how have you determined to better obey God?
7. Specifically, what area of your life do you feel that God most wants to change? Have you taken specific steps to make those changes?
8. What good habit do you feel God wants to form in your life? Have you taken specific steps to develop that habit?

J. More missional questions:

1. What worries or other issues are you currently facing?
2. Is there an area that God is working on in your life or any sin that you would like to pray about?
3. For what non-Christian friends can we pray?
4. In your reading of the Bible: Who is God? What does Jesus expect of you? What do you think He is saying to you? How do you think you should respond?

K. Basic accountability questions:

1. What is God telling you to do?
2. What are you going to do about it?