

EMBARK

Fall 2016

SUGGESTED AGENDA FOR THE TEN WEEK GATHERINGS FOR EXISTING COMMUNITY GROUPS

Below are listed several suggested evaluative questions existing CGs can address during the ten weeks of the Embark series starting this September. Some of the questions are hard ones and require an openness and honesty of all group members, about which the overseers of a group may need to help prepare the members.

Some of those leading the CG may find it difficult to engage in such a potentially revealing evaluation. However, it is my hope that the growth of those **servant-helpers** (leaders), the group-as-a-whole and its individual members are worth the risk of vulnerability through open critique.

It is my belief that all groups would do well to having one or two yearly evaluations. All of us servant-helpers need to be accountable to those we serve and open to individual feedback and/or a group's collective leading through which God also speaks and the Spirit leads. The information culled from such an evaluation can then be used for decision-making and setting plans for group changes and enhancement.

FIRST THREE WEEKS' AGENDA:

Suggested Group Evaluation and Planning

It would be helpful to give the below questions for each particular week to every group member one week in advance of discussion. This would give group members sufficient time to reflect on the questions and add depth to their answers.

Week 1

1. **Servant-helper(s) and group members write out the top five or more goals or reasons why they are in the group and what they hope to get from the group.**
2. **Have servant-helper('s) and members' personal goals been achieved or are they being achieved in the group? What changes are needed to meet your goals?**
3. **What personal needs are being met in the CG and which one's are not? What changes would you suggest be made in the group to meet those needs?**
4. **In what ways have you grown in the past year as a result of being in the group?**

Week 2

1. **Write a list of the different activities, tasks, rituals, etc. in which the group engages each week (i. e., frequency of regular gatherings, social time in and out of regular gatherings, type of discussions (sermon-based, or other resource), approach to discussions, length of time, place of**

meeting, prayer time, number of members, adherence to attendance, etc.).

2. Regarding #1 above.

What changes would you like to see made to your group from those things on your list?

(Which ones would you like to see eliminated from your get togethers? Which ones would you like to modify? Which ones would you like to see continue as is?)

3. What things would you like to see included in your get togethers that is not currently happening or not on your list?

4. Which of the following necessary parts of a group are included in your CG? If any are missing, do you want them included? Do you want any to be of greater focus in the group?

a.) **RELATIONSHIP**

Purpose: To socialize and to connect with others and God. Are you satisfied with the depth of personal relating in your group? Is there a sufficient amount of self-revelation in the group? Trust? Acceptance? Sense of belonging? What would you like to be different? How can the CG foster better relationships with others and God?

b.) **EDUCATIONAL**

Purpose: Provide information and expand one's knowledge base on a subject. Are you growing in the knowledge of the Lord and the Bible? Is your mind being transformed according to Scripture? Is there sufficient information beyond elementary principles or are you looking for even more depth of understanding?

c.) **GROWTH**

Purpose: Help one another grow by developing strengths, spiritual gifts and character. Do you believe you are spiritually growing at a pace with which you are comfortable? Do you believe your character is more Christlike than one year ago? How have you personally changed since being in the CG?

d.) **WORKS-BASED**

Purpose: Work together to accomplish agreed upon projects and tasks. Does the group help one another with things that are beyond an individual's ability, knowledge, etc.? Would you like your group to have more of an outreach, i.e., in the church or local community? With whom? How is needed to make that happen?

e.) **SUPPORT**

Purpose: Provide emotional and moral support for those with common experiences, concerns, problems and temptations. Do you believe the group members really have your back—that you can fully depend on them to be there and help when you really are in need? Are you comfortable asking the group for help or not and why? Are you there for them? Is prayer time sufficient to address personal issues? Are

members self-revealing or open about their own individual (not just others) needs in requesting prayer?

CGs are not therapy groups, but they need to be therapeutic. It is helpful to make room in the group for discussion of personal issues, which is a necessary part of “doing life together.”

5. Collectively, the five parts of #4 above are all necessary for any group to be fully functional, grow and do life together. The model of the early church in Acts 2:44-45 challenges us to think about the depth of doing life together. Believers “had all things in common” and freely shared their resources with one another according to need. They truly had one another’s backs in all areas of living.

To what degree do you believe your CG should extend its view of doing life together to include all aspects of life, like the sharing of available resources, such as: time, energy and, when genuinely needed, even financial resources?

Do you believe that giving more time and energy to others in these ways will result in being unduly taxed or drained? Or is it possible you will find in such accepting and committed relationships you reap more than you sow and feel more energized and secure because of the depth of mutual support and love?

Week 3

- 1. Continued evaluation, if necessary.**
- 2. Servant-helper(s) and group engage in decision-making regarding changes voiced by all.**
- 3. Implement a plan of action and time framework concerning decisions reached by all.**
- 4. If there is time remaining, it could be spend on talks that help reveal greater depths of each person that assist in trust building or activities to develop unity, teamwork and relational connections.**

LAST SEVEN WEEKS’ AGENDA:

You will have access to seven brief videos (each about 10 minutes) presented by Pastor Mark on seven core values of the church:

Jesus
Heart
Spirit
Mission
Love
Small Groups
Leadership

These will be your discussion points for those seven weeks. I will also be providing you with suggested questions to help facilitate each discussion, as there will not be the usual sermon-based questions during the season of EMBARK.