

GOING DEEPER

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GOING DEEPER | FOLLOW

Groups Of 3

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What is a **Group of 3**?

- It is 3 people who meet to encourage, challenge and hold each other accountable to the great priorities of every Christ-follower: 1) feasting on Jesus, 2) fighting their sin and 3) fulfilling their mission.
- The group commits to meeting at least every other week for an hour or more to answer some key questions.
- Usually these are groups of spiritual peers, but they can also be a great way for seasoned believers to disciple 1 or 2 less experienced believers, while still benefiting themselves.
- Groups are same-gender.

Why start a **Group of 3**?

- **Scripture reveals the power of two or three teaming together tightly:** 'Where two or three gather in my name, there I am with them' (Matt 18:20). 'Two is better than one. If one falls down, the other can pick them up. A chord of three is not easily broken.' (Eccl 4:9-11) 'One man chases a thousand, but two can put ten thousand to flight' (Deut 32:30).
- **Sustained change requires accountability.** Ever tried to form a habit like losing weight or running *on your own*? No matter how committed you are, the odds are *against* you. But if you join a Weight Watchers or find a running partner, it's much easier. It's the same with following Christ: alone we likely fall or stagnate, but together we likely stand and progress in our walk with Christ. This is because encouraging, authentic and accountable relationships are pivotal to thriving as a

Christ-follower: 'Encourage one another daily, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness' (Heb 3:13).

How Groups of 3 complement Small Groups

Both *Small Groups* and *Groups of 3* help us to feast on Jesus, fight sin and fulfill our mission. **Small Groups**, however, are best for 1) integrating new people into our faith community, 2) building wider relationships with a family of believers, 3) taking God's word seriously and applying what God is saying to us as a church through the Sunday preaching, and 4) putting ourselves under the care and oversight of pastors who team with small group leaders. **Groups of 3** are best for deeper accountability and more focused discipleship. In summary, they complement, not compete with each other.

Why we feast on Jesus, fight our sin and fulfill our mission.

- *Feasting on Jesus is our greatest privilege.* Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry' (John 6:35). *It is the secret to fighting our sin:* we don't only conquer sin by working hard to change our actions, but by trusting Christ to change our affections. In the process, we lose our taste for sin and grow our taste for Jesus. *It is also the secret to fulfilling our mission:* we can only contagiously commend to others what we ourselves cherish and enjoy. Only as we remain in him can we be fruitful.
- *Fighting our sin is a kill-or-be-killed affair.* 'If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live' (Rom 8:13).
- *Fulfilling our mission is our God-prepared destiny.* 'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works which he prepared in advance for us to

do' (Eph 2:10). 'See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord' (Col 4:17).

How we feast on Jesus.

- By daily reading and reflecting on Scripture (John 15:7).
- By thirsting and asking for the infilling of his Spirit (John 7:37-39).
- By keeping company with him throughout our day (Matt 11:28-30).
- By listening to what he is saying to and showing us (Matt 4:4).

How we fight our sin.

- By identifying and addressing those areas of our life where we struggle to trust Christ (Galatians 3:6-9).
- By identifying and addressing the cracks that exist in our character and relationships (Col 3:5-8).
- By identifying and addressing the God-substitutes we turn to for heart-deep satisfaction and security (Jer 2:13).
- By confessing our sins to one another (Jam 5:16).
- By drawing on the resources we have in Christ (2 Pet 1:2-3).

How we fulfill our mission.

- By loving and serving the people closest to us (John 13:34).
- By strengthening our church (1 Pet 4:10), especially discipling newer believers (Matt 28:19).
- By responding to injustice and poverty (Isa 58:6-12).
- By integrating our faith into our work-life (Gen 2:15).
- By building relationships with and reaching out to people who are far from God (1 Thes 2:8).

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR A GROUP OF 3 MEETING

Opening (5 min)

1. Briefly open in prayer.
2. Briefly share a high and low since we last met.

Part 1: Feast on Jesus (20 min)

1. What book(s) in the Bible have you been reading and reflecting on? What are the most significant 2 or 3 insights you have had, from which passages? (*Bibles open.*)
2. Since we last met, when did you feel closest to Christ, and most filled with his Spirit?
3. Have you had any success in keeping company with Christ throughout the day?

4. What has God been showing or saying to you?

Part 2: Fight your sin or fulfill your mission (25 min)

Alternate between the two options each time you meet.

Fight your sin.

1. In what area(s) of your life are you struggling to trust Christ?
2. Where are the cracks showing in your character and relationships?
3. Is Christ currently satisfying and securing the depths of you – or is there some God-substitute (a person, activity or thing) you're hoping will?
4. Where have you sinned or been seriously tempted lately? How often? What were the circumstantial and emotional triggers?
5. How do you plan on drawing on your resources in Christ to overcome these struggles, cracks, God-substitutes and sins?

Fulfill your mission.

In what ways, if any, have you struggled to or has God helped you to:

1. Make the people closest to you feel loved and served?
2. Strengthen our church and disciple newer believers?
3. Respond to injustice and poverty?
4. Integrate your faith into your work-life?

5. Build relationships with and reach out to people who are far from God?

Closing (10 min).

1. Anything you want us to hold you accountable for next time we meet?
(Someone should record these and to repeat in the following meeting.)
2. Anything you want us to pray for?
3. Pray

12 Tips

1. Try meet over breakfasts, lunches or coffee. Put the dates in your calendars far in advance. It must be top priority.
2. Honour the time limitation of the meeting. On average, each question gets 5 minutes for all 3 to share. Think through your answers before meeting.
3. Enjoy friendship time beyond these meetings. Be there for each other in tough times.
4. Remember accountability is something given, not taken. It is not the job of the group to demand you walk in the light, it's your responsibility.
5. Be patient with yourself. If you're new to whole-hearted Christ-following, you may be overwhelmed by how out of shape you are spiritually. Hang in there. Over time, being in this group will get you in shape.
6. Honour confidentiality.
7. If need be, steer each other to additional help beyond the group.
8. Sit under weekly anointed biblical preaching which fans into flame the 3 priorities around which the group gathers: feasting on Jesus, fighting sin, fulfilling mission.
9. Try out daily accountability (via *Whatsapp*). For example, everyone could share a single verse or insight that stood out to them in their Bible reading.
10. Try journaling – start recording those things you believe God is saying to or showing you. Bring these journals to the meetings.

11. Help start new groups by spreading the word, or by letting a 4th person join your group for no longer than a few times, then 1) encourage them to start their own or 2) multiply into 2 groups.

12. Re-read these 12 tips as a group from time to time.