

You use steel to sharpen steel ,
and one friend sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other,
so that you can live together whole and healed.
James 5:16

Spiritual Friendship Groups

A spiritual friendship group is a group of 3-4 believers of the same sex who meet weekly or every other week to encourage one another to grow up into Christ Jesus. We share about the state of our hearts, lovingly holding one other accountable to commune with God between meetings, and to pray for God's Kingdom to come into our lives, those of our seeking friends, and into specific situations in our world.

Why are these groups needed?

Jesus gave us a model for friendship in which we are called to lay our lives down for each another, to be devoted to his teachings, and to bear spiritual fruit outward in our relationships. (John 15:12-17) A spiritual friendship group provides a context in which this kind of growth and care becomes a reality. We need mutual shepherding because our hearts go astray. Here's our balanced approach:

1. **Mutual Encouragement:** we share about God's work in our souls, we confess our sins in a safe and confidential environment, we pray for one another, and we hold out the Kingdom vision for growth and vitality for one another.
2. **Sharing God's Word:** We share about how God has spoken to us since we met last. We seek help to feed on God's word and to encounter him in all aspects of life.
3. **Prayer for the Kingdom's Advance:** We pray for others specifically, consistently, hopefully, and strategically. We give priority to prayer for those who are not actively following Jesus and situations where the Kingdom needs to break through.

Questions for our Meetings

Suggested questions for our meetings are on the back of this card. We don't answer each one at every meeting, but these give us some ideas for the kinds of questions we should be asking.

1. What is the condition of our hearts? To what degree have we been able to keep our hearts in the love of God, "delighting in the Lord" and receiving his merciful love since our last meeting? (Luke 10:26-28, Ps. 34:8, Jn. 6:35, Jude 20-21) Are we creating sacred space in our lives, slowing down to hear God, keeping the Sabbath?
 - Can you share something encouraging about God's goodness with us? (Heb. 10:24-25, Phil. 4:4-9)
2. How are we wrestling with the different forms of unbelief in this past season? Anxiety, toxic shame, bitterness/blame, regret, impatience, envy/jealousy, despair, pride, or disordered desires and acts: relating to money, sex, power, food/alcohol, computer/media, gossip, etcetera.
 - Have you given in to an addiction this past week?
 - Are there sins you need to confess?
 - Are we being fully honest with each other?
3. How are we doing in loving those God has put in our lives? Daily relationships like work/room-mates as well as family/friends. Are we walking with humility and forgiveness?
4. How has God spoken to you since our last meeting?
 - How are you doing with Scripture intake; are you delighting in the Word? (Col. 3:16, Ps. 119)
 - How else might God be speaking to you? (nature, circumstances, relationships, life vision work, etc.)
5. How can we pray specifically to see Jesus' Kingdom come? (Mt. 6:9-13) To whom is God calling you to share the Gospel? (through generosity, verbal witness, hospitality, listening, peacemaking, offer of prayer) Is there someone we can we invite into our SFG? Is one of us called to start one w/others?
