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# REFLECTIONS ON SMALL GROUPS

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## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to navigate the different ways that Christian “small” groups can be structured, and weigh the pros and cons of each one. This will help leaders who desire to create some sort of “small” group know how to best structure it. (On a side note, I am currently using the word “small” group to indicate that people may use that same word to describe an even a large group, small being smaller than the entire church. However, in the next section I will address small and large group structure, and hopefully clear some of the confusion up).

## Large groups and Small Groups



Here are categories based on the size of a small group:

- Deep Group.
  - Size: 2 people, and thus will end up being a one on one
  - Helpful in hashing out vulnerable parts of people's lives
  - Goes deep, but often does not go wide, as it misses out on different perspectives
- Close Group:
  - Size: 3-5
  - Helpful in dealing with common struggles through encouragement and insight
  - People will be discussing so much; they will talk over each other
- Small groups
  - Size: 5-13
  - Helpful in personal understanding and application of biblical principles
  - People now will start to take turns talking.
- Medium Groups
  - Size: 10-30
  - Helpful in getting a broad perspective on issues.
  - People will start needing prompts for discussion.
- Large group
  - Size: 25 and up
  - Helpful in seeking expert/insightful advice
  - Discussion may only work in breakout groups. Also, get sound equipment.

## Studies, Discussions, Workshops, and Lectures



In this section, we will be taking a look at four primary ways that information is conveyed in groups, their strengths, as well as what size they fit best in.

- Studies
  - Typically revolves around a book/material, and answering a list of questions
  - Well structured for both time and concepts learned, but is less personal
  - Best for small and medium sized groups, lends itself to be a little too formal for close and deep groups, and large groups size makes going over questions weird
- Discussions
  - Book/material may not be needed, and questions are given to start a dialogue
  - Very personal, yet some may feel left out due to someone “taking over” the conversation. At the mercy of wherever the conversation leads
  - Best for deep and close groups, can work well in small, but any larger, and it will be hard to follow the conversation
- Workshops
  - This involves a presentation that revolves around audience participation
  - Has structure and personal involvement, limited to teaching practical skills
  - Best for medium sized groups, can work well in large and small sized groups, perhaps too focused on the presenter for close and deep groups.
- Lectures
  - Standard presentation, given under the assumption of note taking
  - Structured, non-involving, non-personal
  - Best for large group sizes, can be done in medium and small.

## Bible Studies and Book Studies



This section will go over the brief differences between Bible studies and book studies, these can also be applied to Bible discussions and book discussions

- Inerrancy
  - The Bible is the infallible word of God, and though interpretation may be wrong, it is still true in what it says/affirms.
  - Books are fallible, and what they try to teach may even be evil.
- Context and Culture
  - Contrary to popular belief, the Bible was not written for you, it was written for specific people, at a specific time. Therefore, understanding the context and culture in which it was written is vital.
  - Books are written for us; they try to explain the context within the book itself.
- Connections and metanarrative
  - Each book of the Bible is interconnected with each other in some way or form. Which is all connected to the redemptive metanarrative of scriptures.
  - Books will try to make connections with the Bible and metanarrative.

The point of this section isn't to badmouth books, rather it is to rightly look at books so that we are not unwise to believe anything they say, even if they have a bible verse to defend themselves. We must weigh what is said in books with what is taught throughout scriptures, and God's creation.