

Going for Growth – Leaders' Notes

Welcome to this new series of studies, “Going for Growth”. They are indented to help your home-group with the process of thinking and praying through whether you wish to take the plunge and become a Growth Group. There will be eight studies, intended to enable your home-group to dig a little deeper into the Growth Group values, the Biblical principles underlying them and how they might be practically worked out in your own group situation.

The format of the notes will be a little different to previous bible studies, as we will start to put into practice some of the ideas behind Growth Groups. You will find that the notes for each week are broken down into a number of clear sections, of which the bible study will be one. Wherever possible, please ask different members of the group to lead each section so that the leader is not doing everything – you will need to take a number of copies of the sheet so that they can be passed on ahead of time to everyone who will be involved in leading a meeting.

Each study will include a suggestion for a time of worship. For some groups this will be ‘second nature’, for others it will be quite a new departure, but please try to set time aside for this. Many groups find singing together difficult and so I will not be suggesting that we worship in that way – if your group is an exception to this then please feel free to do your own thing! What I will try to do is to provide some creative ideas for expressing worship in a home-group context. If you come up with

others of your own please pass them on so that other groups can try them too.

There will also be a deliberate emphasis on allowing space for individuals to talk about themselves and their ‘stories’. Sometimes this will be light hearted, sometimes rather more serious, sometimes it will be closely tied to the bible study other times it will take the form of an introductory ‘ice-breaker’ or even part of the worship time. Please try to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

At the heart of each set of notes will be a bible study, although these may be a little shorter than normal to ensure that there is plenty of time for discussion. Each study will lead into a discussion around how what we have learned can be put into practice, not in theory but in our own home-group here and now. Each group is very different and so it will not be possible to put down on paper all the questions that may arise or need to be discussed. I hope you will see these discussions as times when God will speak to you all about your group and not just an exercise in answering the specific questions asked. You may well need to take more time over some of the issues that are raised and ‘re-visit’ them in subsequent weeks.

I hope that you and your group will find these studies both interesting and challenging, and that they will make a useful contribution to your discussions about becoming a Growth Group. As ever, please keep me posted with any questions, problems or feedback.

God bless,

Paul.