

## 3/3<sup>rd</sup>s Group Meeting Format

You can think of the 3/3<sup>rd</sup>s Group Meeting Format as a framework for any kind of conversation or agenda for a Bible-based discovery meeting. This format can be used whenever followers of Jesus meet. It is flexible: It can be extended over multiple hours or it can be done simply in thirty minutes.

**Note:** This is not a traditional Bible study with a designated teacher (where expanding knowledge is the primary goal). This is a discovery Bible discussion, where the primary goal is to hear from God both individually and collectively then make commitments on how each person will respond/practice what God has revealed to them.

Facilitation should be shared in the group (i.e. don't have the same person facilitating the group every meeting). The goal is not to exchange knowledge, but to discover God's truth, hear his direction and establish accountability around obeying what he reveals. It is important that everyone participates, and try to let the interaction flow naturally (e.g. try to avoid going around the room in an ordered fashion).

The format is broken into three segments ("thirds"): "look back" on events since the previous meeting to highlight and celebrate how God has worked, "look up" to hear from God as we read and discuss his Word, and "look forward" to hear from God and commit to obeying what he reveals to us.

### First "3<sup>rd</sup>" – Look Back

**Care and Worship.** Share a meal together. Interact around how everyone's personal relationship with God has been. If anyone is struggling, pray for him/her, and stay after to care for that person. Spend some time worshipping God through singing and prayer, using any spiritual gifts God has given your church.

### Check-Up [never skip]

Questions to Ask:

- How have you obeyed what you have learned?
- Who have you trained in what you have learned?
- With whom have you shared your story (i.e. testimony) or God's story (i.e. the gospel)?

### Vision [never skip]

Remind the group what their vision is every week: to multiply disciples and groups/churches. Share a story from the Bible, a personal story, or song to encourage one another to share Jesus with others, start new groups/churches, and help others do the same. Or use one of the following Bible passages to get started: Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 10:1-11, Luke 19:1-10, Acts 1:8.

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### Second “3<sup>rd</sup>” – Look Up

**Pray.** Talk with God simply and briefly. Ask God to teach you this week's passage.

**Read and Discuss.** Read this week's passage, then ask:

- What did you like about this passage?
- What did you not like (or what did you find challenging) about this passage?

Read this week's passage again, then ask:

- What does this passage teach us about God?
- What does this passage teach us about people?

### Third “3<sup>rd</sup>” – Look Forward

**Pray, listen, and make commitments [never skip]**

Allow a brief time (three to five minutes) for everyone in the group to pray silently for God to show them how to answer these questions:

- How will you obey this passage?
- Who will you train with this passage?
- With whom will you share your story or God's story?

After the time of prayer and reflection, each person shares with the group what God revealed to them. Have someone write down each person's response and what they will commit to do in the coming week to obey.

**Practice [never skip]**

In groups of two or three, take a few minutes to practice what you have committed to do in the questions above. For example:

- Role-play a difficult conversation
- Create a specific plan or steps about how you will face a temptation
- Practice teaching today's passage, or
- Practice sharing the gospel.

After you are done, pray with your partner(s) and ask God to prepare the hearts of the people who will be hearing about Jesus this week. Ask Him to give you the strength to be obedient to your commitments.

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### **Group Meeting Principles**

#### **Small**

Keep groups small. Start groups around circles of relationships, people who already know each other. Meet where these people already gather, for example in a home, café, or under a tree. With a larger group, divide into sub-groups of three to five people if you are short on time.

#### **Everyone Learns to Grow On Their Own**

In the group, everyone learns to grow by doing the following on their own:

1. Tell others about Jesus
2. Learn from the Bible
3. Talk with God and listen to Him
4. Help and encourage other believers
5. Boldly face persecution and hard times.

#### **Consider Everyone a Potential Disciple-Maker**

View everyone as a potential disciple-maker, regardless of whether they have trusted Jesus or not. Leaders do not require formal training or authorization. Anyone can lead the discussion, and in fact everyone in the group should lead the discussion at some point.

#### **Obey and Train**

The groups are obedience-based, not knowledge-focused. Follow Jesus by learning and obeying the Bible through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Make practical and specific commitments each meeting and review them the next time you meet. Become “fishers of people” by training others how to learn and obey as well. This creates an environment in which loving Jesus means obeying Jesus.

#### **Discuss and Discover**

Focus on the Bible. Trust the Holy Spirit to help each person discover the meaning of Scripture. Lead through asking questions rather than preaching or teaching.