

HOME-BASED CHURCH GATHERING *HOW-TO*

Three sections: LOOK BACK. LOOK UP. LOOK FORWARD. (2hrs)

LOOK BACK (45mins) Smaller groups

- Open in prayer and share a potluck meal (or snack).
- During the meal, split into smaller groups of 4-8 based on gender.
- Report on how last week's "growth goals" and prayer requests went (30 mins).

LOOK UP (45mins) All come back together

- Optional: open or close with one or two songs.
- "Open sharing time." (15 minutes) Say, *"In our open sharing time, you can share a SHORT story of an answer to prayer, an opportunity to share your faith, an encouraging insight from the Bible, or another 'God story' that you think would encourage the group. If there are 15 people in the group, then everyone can share if we limit our sharing to a minute or so."*
- Distribute identical Bibles, pick ONE passage, 5-15 verses or so, give the page #, ask God to speak to us through His Word.
- Share the 2 ground rules each week. **"1. Stick with THIS text. 2. Participate, but don't dominate."**
- Read the passage out loud slowly and clearly. Then have everyone read it silently. With open Bibles, walk through the passage and ask, **What does it say?** Or *"What stands out to you as important from this passage? Why?"*
- Keep bringing it back to the text. Say *"What else does this text say?"*
- Finish by asking, *"How can we live it out?"*

LOOK FORWARD (30mins) (Back to smaller group)

- Split back up into the same smaller groups as the "look back" segment.
- Choose a "scribe" to write down everyone's goals and prayer requests.
- With Bibles open, ask EACH group member, **What do I do? Start? Stop? Who do I tell? Any other prayer requests?"**
- Pray. Have each person pray for someone in the circle or have one person pray for everyone.

Best Practices

- Choose passages most relevant to your group or pick a New Testament book.
- Facilitate, don't teach. Let Scripture be the teacher. *Truth discovered is more impactful than truth delivered.*
- Guide the group with clarifying questions. Try not to speak more than any other group member.
- If someone is dominating, say, *"Anyone else have a thought?"*
- Have fun! Laugh together, let things breathe. Goal: "This is my favorite night of the week!"
- Encourage members to interact throughout the week.
- Be on the lookout for potential future leaders and assign them different responsibilities.
- The leader may wish to study the passage in advance, writing down any relevant "bonus" application-focused questions.