

ADDING SOMEONE TO A COMMUNITY GROUP

THE VISION

Wouldn't it be nice if you were in community with your best friends and no one ever left the group and you all stayed in community for life? As great as that sounds, it's very unlikely and can actually be unhealthy for your group. Adding to your group brings new life, energy and a renewed commitment from the current members. Never adding new members will lead to stagnation, complacency, and drifting into purposelessness, which we want to avoid at all cost.

Community Groups go through transition for a myriad of reasons: marriage, job change, move, etc. As a result, it's not uncommon for groups to lose folks and be in a position where they need to add more. Below are some guidelines for adding new group members.

WHEN THE GROUP WANTS TO ADD A MEMBER OR MEMBERS:

First, ask the question:

"Is our group currently healthy?" Adding people to an unhealthy group isn't wise.

- If not, set a date to revisit this idea after you have made the appropriate changes.
- If yes, then, ask these questions:
 - Is this the right time? (If you are in the middle of a vulnerable study, it may not be the appropriate time to add someone.)
 - Is this the right person or persons? (Can they commit to the expectations you all have for each other and as a group?)
 - If they cannot attend regularly, this would not be the best person to add.
- Ask each member how they feel about adding someone (both at that time and that specific person or persons). If there is a split, consider how strongly the opposing members feel and if it will cause major issues in the group.
- Take a vote. If you do add, everyone needs to agree to that decision.
- Keep the culture of your current group unless you are looking to make some changes that will make your group stronger.
- In advance, discuss the group's expectations with the potential members and see if this is a fit for both parties.
- Once the decision has been made, you will need to realign the group's expectations.
- This is now a "new" group. Understand that when you add a person, the dynamic of the group changes. It will begin to function differently to accommodate a new person with new ideas, struggles, and God-given gifts who you want to make room for and enjoy.

Things to Remember:

- When adding new people, it is the group's role to make them feel welcome and pursued, instead of the new people feeling like they need to fit in.
 - Each member needs to pursue the new members outside of group.
 - Organize a few social gatherings in the first few months to help speed up the integration process.
 - Men reach out to the husband for lunch/coffee, women reach out to the wife.
 - Have everyone re-share their story, and at the end, invite the new people to share theirs.