

GROWTH GROUP KICK-OFF STUDY FOR 2017

AIMS FOR LEADERS

- Get everyone in the group sharing
- Promote a space where everyone listens to each other
- Be fuelled in our thinking from some verses from Colossians
- Reset the agenda for the year
- Communicate with the group the shape of the year in terms of what is coming up on Sundays at church.

INTRODUCTION

We're back and I hope that it's a good feeling. Settle back into the couch. It's good to be amongst old friends. But wait! - there are all kinds of different Crossroads growth groups: arvo, evening, morning, women's, men's, campus etc.

Not to mention the following.....

- The "Just starting this week for the first time" group - we hope that you've met everyone by now.
- The "We've been together for years" group

Or you could be a dynamic mixture of the above 2 - a bunch of old timers with a mix of newcomers.

In our first meeting we want to set some expectations for the year - it's a chance for each of us to express what we would love to see happen throughout the year in the life of this group. If you're in a "We've been together for years" group then we hope that it won't be the "same old, same old" thing to stop you from dreaming big dreams for your group into 2017.

Our prayer is that by the end of this meeting we will have listened carefully to one another and that all of us will be ready to come prayerfully each week anticipating what God will do amongst you. As we'll see in our readings from Colossians, God has great plans for his people and our prayer is that your group plays an important role in the fulfilment of these.

Ask someone to lead the group in prayer.

TEXTS FOR READING WITH QUESTIONS

A. Colossians 1:28 -2:3 ESV

28 Him (Christ) we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1. The apostle Paul is speaking of his own ministry. How much of what he says here applies exclusively to his situation?
2. What relevance, if at all, might what Paul writes here have to do with your growth group meetings in 2017?
3. Which of these verses inform the goal that we set for our group? How?

B. Colossians 2:6-7

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

1. This is undoubtedly the key message of Paul's letter and will be quite familiar to many of us. What strikes you particularly as you read these verses today? What can you take from them into the life of your group. Share these thoughts with the rest of the group.

C. Colossians 2:12-17

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

1. Where do we even begin when it comes to thinking about these verses? Perhaps the best place to start is on our knees!
2. In what ways can we put into practice what Paul writes here in our group?

You may have been involved in Crossroads growth groups over a long period of time or this may be your first experience. Think about what you've loved about groups you've known in the past and share one idea with the others in your group.

Create a wish list for your group by gathering points from the answers given to the following question writing it up so that everyone can see it (butcher's paper, whiteboard)

What would be one thing that you would love to see on a wish list for your group?

Here are some ideas that you might like to draw on:

- Show love to one another in concrete ways
- Be there for one another - at the group meeting time but also outside of that time
- Ask God to help you grow in your knowledge and love of the Word
- Be real with one another
- Help each other to be practical in applying the Word
- Encourage the leaders of your group - pray for them and give them feedback
- Offer to lead studies where appropriate
- Look out for one another's needs
- Seek to be equipped and trained
- Serve together in a practical way at church - there are many serve opportunities

We've already finished the letter of James and will be looking at Luke 4-9 in the coming weeks. Later in the year at church we'll look at Philipians, Daniel, dabble in the Reformation and then finish in Hebrews.

For further reading on growth group life - see Dave McDonald's really good article in Crossroads Growth Group Leaders Leaders's toolkit - <http://crossroads.asn.au/purpose-growth-groups-0>

Pray together about your year as a growth group in 2017