



Guidelines for Accountability in Groups

These guidelines were created to help you, the group leader, with starting and maintaining a relational dynamic in your meeting that leads to high trust and transparency between all group members. In our experience, this happens best in groups of six members or less where attendance is stable and participation is effortless. In other words, you will have to work consistently to create a relational environment that rewards its disciples for making themselves vulnerable. Not to fear! We have developed your group curriculum to draw people into the Bible, the Spirit, and one another. Think of accountability as that precious layer of honesty that God uses to propel your disciples into the deepest network of care and support that they will ever experience in this life.

To get to this experience a few principles must be observed, namely:

1) "Accountability without relationship is tyranny."

We don't know who coined this phrase, but it is certainly one of the most accurate statements we have ever heard regarding accountability. People must be proactively building close friendships with other people of the same gender before they can successfully get to the stage of accountability with their peers. It is possible that accountability can happen with a spiritual authority figure (e.g., a pastor) without a close friendship. But for the average person, friendship and trust must be developed first.

2) Accountability is when I give you permission to ask the tough questions.

Where things usually go wrong is when a leader comes in with an agenda for the other men or women, willing them to be held accountable. Real and true accountability takes place in relationship. It occurs when I recognize a weakness in my life and I give you permission to ask me tough questions. To get to that point, we should study accountability and discuss it with other men or women, starting with some Scripture:

Proverbs 27:6, 17

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Philippians 2:4, 20

John 13:34

Galatians 6:1-2

James 5:16

This is a good way to open a dialogue in your group on areas that men or women are willing to be held accountable for.

“The purpose of accountability is nothing less than to each day become more Christ-like in all our ways and be ever more intimate with Him.”

-Patrick Morley

3) Accountability needs to be modeled.

Who is holding you accountable for the spiritual areas of your life? It's tough to invite other men or women to open themselves up for accountability if you're not first willing to be accountable in some way. Before launching accountability in your group, spend some time understanding how accountability works with some men or some women (same sex) that you already have a relationship with.

Take it slowly at first. Don't try to immediately delve into the deepest, darkest corners of your life. Begin by having your closest friends hold you accountable for things like praying regularly and issues of integrity. As you see benefits and results from this you will also build up trust, which is necessary for accountability in more personal and private areas.

Weekly Accountability Questions

Use the following two questions in your group time, either at the beginning or near the end of the group to open your accountability segment:

- A) How has God blessed you this week? (What went right?)
- B) What problem has consumed your thoughts this week? (What went wrong?)

When starting out with accountability take the time for a conversation about what each of the following terms means to them. Ask them what accountability in each of these specific areas would look like for them, and share your responses. Remember that accountability is giving one another permission to ask the tough questions. Some sample questions have been given to help your group define the terms. In your group time for accountability, discuss the areas that have been shared in the recent past. Open them up each week to a new area, possibly related to the group story, as time permits.

Spiritual Life

God's word :: Have you read it consistently? How many days? How long? If not, why not? Will you next week? What has God been teaching you?

Temptation :: How have you been tempted this week? How did you respond?

Confession :: Do you have any un-confessed sin in your life?

Worship :: Did you worship in church this week? Was your faith in Jesus strengthened? Was He honored?

Witness :: Have you shared your faith? In what ways? How can you improve?

Home Life

Spouse :: How are things with your spouse? (Discuss time, meaningful conversation, attitudes, intimacy, irritations, disappointments, his/her relationship with Christ, etc.)

Children :: How is it going with your children? (Discuss giving encouragement, quantity and quality of time, values, education, spiritual welfare, etc.)

Finances :: How are your finances doing? (Discuss debts, sharing, saving, spending, stewardship, etc.)

Time :: How have you invested your time around the house?

Work Life

Job :: How are things going? (Discuss career progress, relationships, temptations, workload, stress, problems, etc.) Are you working too much?

Critical Concerns

God's Will :: Do you feel you are in the center of God's will? Do you sense His peace?

Thought Life :: What are you wrestling with in secret?

Service :: What have you done for someone else this week, which can't be repaid? (Discuss the poor, encouragement, mercy, service to others, etc.)

Priorities :: Are your priorities in the right order?

Integrity :: Is your moral and ethical behavior as it should be?

High Risk :: What is your "high risk" area (the area in your life where you are most vulnerable?) How are you doing in your personal "high risk" area?

Transparency :: Is the "visible" and "real" you consistent in our relationship? (If not, how so?)