

reNEW

Bible principles and practical steps
towards church revitalisation

notes for introductory session

This workbook may contain preparatory notes,
leaders notes, participant notes or discussion starters.
It can be downloaded as a pdf and printed as required.



ReNew

Leaders Notes

General Notes on Leading a Group

00 Covid

These notes were written during Covid lockdown 2020. Hopefully effective vaccines will soon allow more normal meetings. While the Covid emergency continues – churches are obliged to follow the rules and guidance that is applicable to their area. It is certainly possible to follow the ReNew course with an online group and Zoom type conference calls

01 Accountability

Try and develop a sense of accountability within the group. If somebody doesn't turn up – they are depriving the group of their fellowship, encouragement, contributions, insight, point of view and wisdom. Clearly not everybody will be able to attend every meeting – but ask people to send a text /email to you as chair and the host if they are not able to come along.

02 Confidentiality

This is not a huge issue for this type of group. But one of the ground-rules of smaller groups is that personal stuff shared within the group is not discussed outside unless specific permission is asked for and given.

03 Timekeeping – Start, Run, Stop

START the meeting on time even if some people have not arrived. If you delay the start of a meeting – it just slips later and later. The first question is specifically designed so that if people turn up a bit late, they will not have missed the heart of the study. It is inevitable that 'something will come up' and that somebody will be a bit late – but it is amazing how often it is the same people!

RUN the meeting on time. Don't let the group wander too far off topic. See how long you have and how many questions there are – and move on to the next question when the allotted time is up.

STOP the meeting on time. Do not over-run. This, like starting on time,

is an integrity issue. If we say the meeting will end at 8:30 but it drags on till 9 – we have not been true to our word and trust will be eroded.

04 Hosting

If it is possible, it is great idea to move the venue around, so that many of the participants can be hosts. Be sensitive – some people live in small houses or their spouses aren't sympathetic. Just ask for volunteers. Keep the hosting simple. DO NOT allow the 'hospitality' to become a 'refreshment arms race'. Some hosts think they are helping by buying expensive cakes, biscuits or drinks. They are being generous, no doubt, but others will not be able to afford that level of refreshments and they will not feel able to offer to host. Tea, coffee, squash and some plain biscuits is enough.

05 Encourage the timid, reign in the noisy

In any group there are people who say too much and those who don't say anything. A large part of task as chair is to keep a lid on the noisy and draw out the timid. You will find that some people feel that their Bible knowledge or theological knowledge is particularly inadequate and they are reluctant to say anything on those matters. The first question in most of the studies is an icebreaker. It is specifically designed to help people get to know each other, to allow people to share who have no Bible knowledge and to be a time buffer for those who arrive late. A useful strategy to draw out the timid and silence to over-talkative is to say "Right - this question is only for those who haven't said anything so far"

06 Cross the ball – don't score

Chairing this group should not be considered as an opportunity for you to dazzle the group with your amazing Bible knowledge. It is not about you! If you are talking for more than a quarter of the time – it is too much. Your job is draw the knowledge out of the group and to encourage and lead them to discover the main principles for themselves. Your job is to cross the ball so well that others can't miss.

07 Next generation

Try new people as chair. Give them the leaders notes in advance and let them lead one question. You might be surprised.

A common reason why churches aren't growing is because present leaders are hogging their roles and responsibilities. Only insecure leaders hog their roles. Good leaders are always looking for the next generation of leaders and to involve and develop others.

08 Don't let prayer get squeezed out

Set aside an amount of time for praying together and don't let that time get squeezed out. Work hard to keep prayer time lively, fresh and creative. Encourage the timid, by asking people to write a prayer in advance and then bring it to the meeting and read it out. Prayer time should be faith-building and uplifting – don't let it become a list of sick-people. Try and keep the prayer centred around the topic of the study.