

LAMPLIGHTERS INTERNATIONAL - DISCIPLE-MAKER TIP #6

TITLE: "HOW TO ESTABLISH THE CULTURE"

It has been said that it is easier to train a child (in the ways of the Lord) than to repair an adult. In the same way, it is easier to establish a healthy Bible Study group than it is to correct group problems that will naturally develop later on. Perhaps the best way to establish a healthy culture is to offer weekly reminders of the expectations for the group until a productive culture is firmly established. Each week take a few seconds to emphasize a single “house rule” until the culture is established. By being proactive, you preclude many of the problems that will inevitably arise. Then periodically remind the group members of the house rules if you see the group departing from a healthy culture.

Here are some of the reminders I use to maintain a healthy Bible Study environment.

1. “Let’s remember to have only one person speaking at a time. That way we can hear what everyone has to say. I know you guys (girls) have good insights and I don’t want anyone to miss something that could benefit everyone else.”
2. “Just a reminder to bring your Bibles each week. We always start by reading the Text and I want everyone to be able to see how we got the answers to the questions right from the Bible.”
3. “Just a reminder to make it a priority to complete your lessons each week. We can all learn from each other when we meet together. If you don’t complete your lesson, we still want you to come, but we will miss the spiritual insights you could add if you work hard on the weekly lessons.”
4. “Just a reminder that we need to start right at _____ am/pm. We operate on the “59-59” rule – fifty-nine minutes and fifty-nine seconds, we start on time and we finish in time. That way everyone can plan their schedules. We need the entire time to complete the lesson and to hear what everyone has to say. Let’s make a disciplined effort to all be here, ok?”
5. “Just a reminder you may have forgotten. We avoid talking about denominations and political parties. I know some of you have strong feelings, but let’s just focus on studying the Bible together.”

When you help the discipleship group establish a healthy culture, the group members will get more out of the study and appreciate your leadership. Remember that God has placed you in the position, so lead.