Small Group Ground Rules

Being part of a small group is a wonderful way to get to know each other, share ideas, learn to be transparent with our joys, needs, and sorrows, and be good life companions. Communicating in a group can be complicated, though! Here are some ground rules that will help us as we work to practice LOVE 1st with each other.

SAFE GROUP: We will all do our part to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their challenges, joys, and needs.

CONFIDENTIALITY: What is said in the group stays in the group.

ACTIVE LISTENING: Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond or what you are going to say next.

PAUSE: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares to give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding. Remember that introverts especially sometimes pause in their speech to finish their thought. Allowing pauses helps us to not talk over each other.

SILENCE: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

NO "CROSS TALK": Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations unless we're specifically splitting into smaller groups to discuss.

NO FIXING: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Encourage; speak truth and ask if advice is wanted before you offer it.

NO RESCUING: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences, either verbal or physical. This will often interrupt the needed emotion and cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people. Allow them space to feel and express; if they need support, trust them to ask for it.

SHARING: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

USE "I" STATEMENTS: It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to communicate from your point of view. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

CONFLICT: We will commit to resolving conflict with love as our priority.