

## Leading a Small Group Discussion

### 1. Prepare

Work through the materials and think yourself into your group meeting.

### 2. Pray

Pray before your group meeting.

### 3. Don't talk too much

Your job is to get people thinking and talking and keep the discussion moving from member to member rather than talking to the members.

### 4. Be A Good Listener

So simple yet so hard to do. Don't just listen to what people are saying – actively listen. The best leaders listen with their eyes and ears.

### 4. Don't Answer Your Own Questions

The whole purpose of asking the question is to create an environment where group members feel safe to share. It's not about getting the right answer. When people are silent with some of these questions, embrace the silence: this might be where the introverts are thinking and the Holy Spirit is speaking!

### 5. Encourage Responses

If no one really speaks you could say something like, "Paul, you look like you were going to say something..."

### 6. Ask Open-Ended Questions

Open-ended questions help group members to say more than a simple yes or no. Use 'what?' or 'how?' questions to get people to open up.

### 7. Try To Involve Everyone

Your group might be too big if everyone isn't able to speak their thoughts. Groups of over eight members will have difficulty doing this. In those cases, it might be best to divide the group into smaller groups for some of the time.

### 8. Keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing!

Remember, the focus is not on getting through the material and you may not cover all the questions. If the discussion is fruitful then allow group members the time they need to discuss, process, and grow with the information.

### 9. Manage the Time

Keep an eye on the clock. Don't let things get bogged down in interesting but irrelevant discussion. Bring things back on track and take the initiative to move things on when it feels right.

### 10. Leave time for application.

Make sure people have time to think about the difference that this discussion will have in their daily 'frontline' lives.



## 4. Jesus: Radical Teacher - Sabbath

(Mark 2:23-3:6)

## WAY IN

When you hear the word 'sabbath' what associations come to mind?

### Key Text: Mark 2:27

Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.

### Read Mark 2:23-3:6

#### Introducing Jesus

## DISCUSS

1. Jesus gets into trouble for his behaviour on the Sabbath Day. Look at Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. What was the purpose of the Sabbath Day as stated in these two passages?
2. The Sabbath Day, as you have just read, is one of the 10 Commandments. Keeping the Sabbath Day holy (special / distinct) was viewed as absolutely important in the Old Testament, where Sabbath is mentioned 154 times. In the New Testament epistles, Sabbath is mentioned just three times. Look them up and see how Sabbath is viewed after Jesus: Colossians 2:16,17;

Hebrews 4:1-10. Also look up this passage which refers to 'special days': Romans 14:5-6. How would you sum up the New Testament's attitude to keeping the Sabbath law?

3. As you have hopefully seen, there is no expectation that Christians will keep the Old Testament Sabbath laws. However, Christians did not abandon the habit of keeping one day in seven special. See: Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Revelation 1:10.

How do you think 'the Lord's Day' differed from the Old Testament 'Sabbath Day'.

4. Why might it still be important to keep a weekly 'Lord's Day'?

5. What would be the essential elements of a 'Lord's Day'? Are there any 'Sabbath principles' that might be helpfully carried over into keeping the Lord's Day special? If so, what are the pros and cons of doing so?

6. Here's a quote from the book, Garden City, by John Mark Comer. What do you make of it?

"I would argue that twenty-first century Americans need to hear the first part of Jesus' teaching: *"The Sabbath was made for man."* It's not now that we have too

many rules for Sabbath, it's that we don't have *any at all*. The vast majority of us don't even take a Sabbath. We love our 'time off. We take holidays and we love to play - and that's great. But very few of us actually take a weekly Sabbath - a day for nothing more than rest and worship".

## WAY OUT

What has each person heard in this session that they want to act on, or think about further.

Pray for one another.

### Commentary Notes: Mark 2:25-28

2:25. Whether or not his opponents agree with Jesus' argument, he has cited biblical precedent for hunger overriding a standard biblical rule; therefore they could not have him disciplined by a local court for defying Torah. Because Jesus is defending his disciples, he mentions "those who were with" David. Even if David was actually alone (1 Sam 21:1), the point is that the priest accepted and acted on David's word that there were others (21:2). Hunger was allowed to take priority over ritual law. 2:26. Abiathar was not yet \*high priest when David was given the bread, but Mark employs the term in the standard manner of his day: "high priest" was applied to any member of the high priestly family with administrative power, which would have included Abiathar when David came to Ahimelech, Abiathar's father. 2:27-28. Although Jesus claims the right to interpret sabbath rules as the authoritative \*Son of Man (Dan 7:13-14), his opponents probably understand him to mean that because the sabbath was made for people (other Jewish teachers also mentioned this point), human beings had authority to do what they needed on the sabbath. ("Son of Man" was a standard \*Aramaic term for "human being," and his hearers may have assumed he meant this, whereas his authority suggests that he claimed to be the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13-14.)

Keener, Craig S.. The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament (p. 135). InterVarsity Press. Kindle Edition.