



Job Description and Standards of Performance for the Host

by

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The role of the host is critical to the success of any small group. Sometimes the leader also hosts the group, but often another person will open his or her home, freeing the leader to focus on teaching and managing the group. Although the host may appear to be of lesser importance than the leader, this is not true. These are two very different roles requiring different gifts—and both are essential to the success of the group. A prepared, relaxed, and welcoming environment will enhance the small group experience for everyone. This can come only through thoughtful preparation.

The structure of the group will determine requirements for the host and the meeting space. While many groups consist of six to 12 people meeting in a home, there are also other configurations. Some small groups meet at a church, a coffee shop, or other public place. Sometimes a larger group meets together for teaching with smaller breakout groups or table hosts for discussion. Regardless of the type of group, it's helpful for one person or couple to be designated as host and/or hostess, responsible for the physical space, the ambiance. Adapt these suggestions to your unique situation.

Personal Characteristics

Objective—Although the host is not the identified spiritual leader of the group, he or she still must maintain a strong personal walk with the Lord by practicing the spiritual disciplines necessary for spiritual fitness and for growing in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Goals

- A. Spend time in the Bible each day pursuing personal growth and maturity.
- B. Practice a consistent prayer life that focuses on praise, thanksgiving, personal needs, the needs of believers, and the needs of the lost.
- C. Spend time in spiritual fellowship with others for the purposes of mutual love, encouragement, and growth.

- D. Be involved in fulfilling the Great Commission by reaching out to the lost, in both word and deed.
- E. Develop and practice the heart of a servant.

Duties Within the Small Group Ministry

Objective—To provide a physical and emotional setting conducive for a small group of believers to grow toward maturity in Christ.

Goals

- A. *Be prepared to welcome members 20 to 30 minutes before the meeting.* This will create a welcoming environment for early arrivals, as well as for leaders, apprentices, and table leaders, who should arrive early to prepare, pray, and settle before the group members arrive.
- B. *Spiritually cleanse the meeting space* by praying for a removal of any defilement left by others who have been in the space, as well as by sin, arguments, and tension. Bring the peace of the Holy Spirit into the room. This is essential for public space, but is also important in a home.
- C. *Provide and/or set up comfortable seating for the number of members and guests expected.* Work with the leader to assure that the set-up accommodates his or her leadership style. For example, do you need tables or the ability for everyone to see a white board?
- D. *Eliminate as many distractions as possible.* These might include:
 1. Children. If yours is not a family group, members must agree upon the policy for children. As host, make sure that your own children are able to safely and quietly play or sleep without creating distractions for the group members. This would include crying, music, TV, telephones, quarrels, and other noise. Some people are easily distractible, and as much as they may love children,

can't focus with background noises. Children running in and out of the room also create a confidentiality issue.

2. Pets. Unless everyone in your group loves Rover and Puff, make sure they are in another room and not barking, jumping at the door, or otherwise creating a nuisance. It may surprise you to learn that many people don't enjoy your animals as much as you do. Also, if you have pets, make sure that no one in your group is allergic. If they are, can you still host the meeting? Is a thorough vacuuming sufficient?
 3. Telephones. Hopefully the leader will ask people to silence cell phones during the meeting. You can help by allowing voice mail to answer your home telephone. Jumping up to answer every phone call communicates that the unidentified caller is more important than the group.
 4. Odors. Don't cook fish or cabbage on small group night. Change the kitty litter. Some hosts light a scented candle, which can add an ambient fragrance, but be sure the candle is smokeless and that no one has fragrance allergies.
- E. *Provide a space and service for refreshments if those are served.* Depending on your arrangement, this may include providing (and preparing in advance of arrival) the coffee, tea and/or water, providing plates and forks, and perhaps arranging a centerpiece or some other welcoming focal point.
1. Share the load for refreshments by rotating that responsibility among the members. Keep a list and if necessary, email a weekly reminder.
 2. If your budget is tight, don't hesitate to ask for help with coffee and other beverages. If attendance varies, ask people to confirm by noon if they plan to attend (or not). This will reduce wasted coffee.
 3. Consider hosting a potluck from time to time. Taking a break from the study will contribute to the fellowship of the group and is as important as the study. Coordinate good times with your leader.
- F. *Coordinate with your leader* to determine schedules and the type of space that will help accomplish the goals for the group.

STANDARDS OF PERFORMANCE

RELATIONSHIPS

Relationship with God

1. Spends regular time in prayer and the Word.
2. Is a growing believer (Reflect on Luke 8:14, Ephesians 4:13, Colossians 4:12, James 1:4).

Relationship to the Church

1. Is committed to the church and to the small group.
2. Is willing to be held accountable

Relationships with Others

1. Has a strong and loving relationship with family.
2. Has a good reputation in the community and in the workplace.
3. Demonstrates a gift of or interest in hospitality (Reflect on Romans 12:13, 16:23; 1 Peter 4:9).
4. Shares faith and has an interest in evangelism if that is a focus in the group.

MINISTRY SKILLS

Hospitality

1. Understands and is able to demonstrate the difference between entertaining and hospitality.
2. Understands how physical space and ambiance contribute to an effective small group experience.
3. Is able to make members and guests feel welcome and cared for.

4. Is willing and able to use personal resources to create a hospitable environment, recognizing that sometimes personal possessions will be damaged.
5. Is willing and able to maintain a comfortably clean home, especially the meeting space and restroom(s).

Small Group Dynamics

1. Demonstrates love and concern for each member. (Reflect on 1 Cor. 12:25, Phil. 2:3).
2. Is able to facilitate relationships within the group and make each person feel welcome and cared for.

Personal Relational Skills

1. Is generally warm, friendly, kind, and welcoming to both friends and strangers.
2. Has the heart and attitude of a servant.

Knowledge

Of the Word

1. Has a good understanding of the gospel message and how it applies to the group and the ministry of hospitality.
2. Understands and supports the basic doctrines of the Christianity.

Of the Church

1. Understands and supports the doctrines, ministry philosophy, strategies, and direction of our church.
2. Understands the nature of the small group and its goals.

Of the Community

1. Knows the demographics of our area and is willing to host those people.