

Table Leader Guide: 2.4 Developing Table Captains

Developing Table Captains

As your ministry grows it is likely your initial core team members will be facilitating small group discussions at different tables. By default they can become your first table captains. As you grow your numbers its important for them to be on the lookout for new men who can step into this role as the need increases.

A good table captain is not the guy who talks the most but one who is good at inviting others to participate in the discussion. He listens well to what is being said, hears where the discussion is moving and can ask questions to help men clarify and expand on what they have said and heard.

The discussion questions are only a starting point. Sometimes you may find your table focusing on only one or two of the questions for the entire meeting. An effective table captain will help to guide and deepen the discussion rather than simply try to cover all the questions.

Attributes of good Table Captains

- Naturally exhibits leadership in the discussion; i.e. helps guide the discussion keeping the questions as the primary focus.
- Listens well to the discussion and the direction it is moving in
- Invites others to speak: helps to balance the airtime between talkers and non talkers
- Is sensitive to notice when someone may be drifting off topic but still needs to be heard?
- Capable of building relationships with the other men: following up after meetings, reaching out to men who may not be showing up?

Developing these capabilities further

Having good discussion questions is only part of leading effective small group sharing. Here are some important reminders to consider and to help successfully string these questions together into a lively, life-giving discussion.

- Serve as a facilitator, not a lecturer. Your goal is to encourage personal interaction and self-discovery. At the same time, feel free to share your own experiences when appropriate.
- Focus on what the scripture and questions have to say over your personal beliefs as a leader. Point members to scripture and allow the Holy Spirit to help group members explore and apply the text.

- Maintain an atmosphere of compassion and acceptance, which will lead to open discussion. Never put down a person's comments or contribution.
- Remember that community and spiritual growth are our main purposes for small group sharing, not top-notch theological discussions. Remember the goal is life change, not simply gaining knowledge.
- Don't be afraid of silence. Too often leaders ask a question, wait three to five seconds and then jump in to answer it themselves. Leave room for the Holy Spirit, the true facilitator, to move in the discussion.

We also suggest having occasional meetings with your Table Captains to share how things are going. New awareness, learning and skill development can come from hearing what other leaders are experiencing and how they are navigating at their tables. The expanded Power Point deck in the following section should also be of great assistance.