



FLATIRONS
COMMUNITY CHURCH



Small Group Fellowship Night Guide:

The Point of the Fellowship Night

Caring is the difference between being a loving, wise disciple-maker and a “Know-It-All.” Nobody likes a know-it-all. They are usually more concerned about being the smartest person in the room than they are about the people themselves. We can easily sniff one out. They give a lot of information, but don’t really *care* about you or how that information impacts your life. But, as we all know from experience, this isn’t how lasting, meaningful relationships are formed.

John C. Maxwell said it best, *“People don’t care about how much you know until they know how much you care.”*

Caring for someone’s heart is a critical component to discipleship and connection of your group so we want to build in moments of brevity, fun, and connection to help create a caring and trusting environment in your group. This is why we have fellowship nights!

“How is your heart this week?”

Caring for someone’s heart is a critical component to discipleship and connection of your group. Throughout Scripture, the “heart” is considered the source of emotion, drive, passion, motivation, speech, etc. And, since God has commanded to “keep your heart with all vigilance, *for from it flow the springs of life*” (Proverbs 4:23), one question your Group must consistently ask one another is, *How is your heart this week?*

Psalms 19:14, Proverbs 4:23, Matthew 5:8, Matthew 12:34-35, Philippians 4:7

What this night could look like for your group

Many times, fellowship night happens best around a table. So, this week will primarily revolve around a meal and fun. Your goal then, as a small group leader, is to create an environment where authentic, heart conversations can happen within this context. The following are various examples of how this might look and what leaders can do to set the stage for heart conversations:

Option 1- Potluck (Best for Week 1 at minimum)

This is simply a meal in your host home where everyone can bring something to eat. Although bringing food may seem like a small thing, it is important in helping others feel a part of your group. Make it fun by setting a theme (Best family recipe, Mexican night, Tailgate food, bring a dish that starts with the first letter of your last name, etc.)

Because we always want to take a moment to open the Scriptures, gathering to pray before your meal is a great opportunity to set up the night and read a passage together. This also gives a moment to introduce visitors in your group and help break the ice. For example, you could say something along these lines:

LEADER: "Hey everyone! Let's gather to pray for our meal. Tonight, at some point during dinner, I'm going to encourage everyone to answer one question: 'How's your heart this week?' That's another way of saying, 'How are you doing? What's been going on in your life?' Be as open and honest as you're comfortable with. In fact, let that be the first thing y'all talk about when you sit down to eat. Find out how the people around you are doing and what's been going on in their lives. I'd also encourage you to sit with someone you haven't gotten to know yet and hear some of their story and get to know them better.

Before we pray, I want to read Psalm 19:14 [any of the five passages listed in the previous section are great "heart" verses as well]. This is David's prayer:

*'Let the words of my mouth **and the meditation of my heart** be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer." Psalm 19:14*

What has been the meditation of your heart this season? It's important that the people in this room know what's going on in your life, so take advantage of this moment to let others into it. Have those conversations over dinner. As we do that, let me pray and then we can eat."

Option 2- Going Out to Eat (Not ideal for first week of Group)

Sometimes it is great to get out of the norm and go eat as a group. If a mixed group - This may also be one outing where your group eats separately (i.e. Men - Buffalo Wild Wings; Ladies - Chili's) or you may all decide to go to the same one. In either case, because of the public atmosphere, you must be very intentional to set the stage for heart conversations. For example,

LEADER: "Hey everyone! [Name] is going to pray for us, but, before he/she does, I wanted to encourage you to ask the people sitting across from you, 'How are you doing? How is your heart?' at some point during your meal."

Option 3- Going to an Event

Sometimes, a simple change of scenery can create a greater sense of community. Plato once observed, "You can learn more about a person in an hour of play than a year of conversation." Having fun together is a huge part of building community. So, try to plan one fun event each semester to attend together. There are a lot of environments that groups have found to be good atmospheres for fun and conversation. Here are several:

- Hikes
- Professional Sports game
- Fourth of July firework display
- Trivia Night at a local restaurant
- Watching a local Christmas parade/light displays
- Going to a pumpkin patch
- Brewery/Wine Tasting
- Farmers Markets/Festivals

- Concerts

Option 4- Host a Game Night

Sometimes just getting together over some board games and snacks is just what people need to connect. Invite group members to bring their favorite group board game and snacks, then spend some time laughing and connecting over some games.