

Multiplying When No One Wants to Divide

A discussion group that regularly has twelve to fifteen people present is likely to benefit greatly by forming two groups. However, making the decision to divide a large group usually meets with resistance. When you can explain the benefits of multiplying and when you go about it in a way that affirms relationships that you have developed, the results are well worth the effort.

WHY MULTIPLY?

1. When a large group becomes two smaller groups, each person has more opportunities to talk. That means participants are interacting more with everyone else in the group, with the issue discussed, and with Scripture.
2. As groups get larger, quiet participants tend to get quieter and interact even less in the group. Multiplying to two groups helps everyone to be an active part of the discussions.
3. All group members—outgoing or not—will feel that they make a stronger contribution to a smaller group and that they are missed if they are absent.
4. Participants are more likely to invite friends to a group that has room for growth, since their coming won't create a space crunch.
5. Multiplying your group allows people who have grown spiritually to become facilitators of a new group. The discipleship continues!
6. We want growth and opportunities for more and more people to be invited to discuss life, God, and the Bible in groups like these. Having a mindset of multiplying means that we can freely encourage more and more people to come and still maintain group sizes that are optimal for great discussions.

HOW TO MULTIPLY LESS PAINFULLY

1. If your group is growing large within the timeframe of a topic or book that you're covering in the Bible, have a brief coffee time together before each discussion begins. Then count off by twos and meet in different rooms of a house for your discussion.
2. As your group draws near to the end of a study guide, make plans to multiply. The beginning of a new study is a natural time to begin meeting in different locations. Wrap up your current group with a closing celebration, form two groups, and invite new people to join you in each new location.
3. Some natural ways groups divide are 1) by geographical location, 2) by day of the week and time a group meets, or 3) by babysitting arrangements. If each group will be studying a different topic or book of the Bible, members can choose the group that interests them most.

4. If everyone can see the value of multiplying but you're having difficulties deciding who will go where, throw all the names into a hat. (Attach those who must stay together for transportation or other reasons.) Then draw names. (Be sure to do this with witnesses or they'll never believe you played fair.)
5. No matter how you choose to form the two (or more) groups, be sure to plan special events where everyone can meet together. A Christmas party would be a natural choice. To keep groups fresh, reorganize once a year.