



BIBLICAL ELDERSHIP RESOURCES

Passing the Baton From One Generation of Elders to Another

Discussion Leaders' Guidelines

Thank you for your willingness to serve as a discussion leader. Your role will be one of the most important of the entire conference. Here are some guidelines to help you make the most of the discussion times under your leadership.

The purpose for the discussion groups is to:

1. **Solidify** the teaching through structured interaction and discussion with others. When it comes to learning, you lose the teaching if you don't begin to interact with, internalize and embrace it.
2. **Engage** the material through mutual challenge and idea sharing. In other words, you snooze, you lose it. Discussion groups are the means to going deeper.
3. **Share** insights and wisdom with each other. There is more "expertise" at the conference than just the main speakers. Each of participant brings his own experience and insights. This truly can be "iron sharpening iron." And it can be a case of those who are older leaders passing the baton of wisdom and insight to those who are younger.
4. **Supplement** the teaching with new questions and applications.

Your role as discussion leader:

1. **Facilitate effectively:** Your task as a discussion leader will be to *facilitate* the discussion with a group of men. These discussions will revolve around pre-designed questions for each teaching session.
2. **Teach sparingly:** Your primary role is *not* to provide additional teaching. Rather it is to guide the discussion and interaction of your group.
3. **Group selectively:** We suggest that you assign people to groups of up to eight (8) people. The make-up of groups will be determined on the day of the conference. At times we will mix things up so groups may change.
4. **Question wisely:** The discussion questions for each session will be found in the participant's packet. We encourage you to stick with the questions provided. But, if your group has a hard time understanding or responding to a given question, feel free to modify or improve on it. But, give the group time to wrestle with each question before moving on. You do not need to cover every question. Begin with the question you feel is best suited to your group of participants. If the discussion carries with one or two questions, that is perfectly fine.
5. **Lead probingly:** As the leader, you will read a question and ask for volunteers to respond. You might ask, for example, "What do you think?" "How would you respond to this question?" "Is this a relevant question for where you are at in your ministry?"
6. **Draw-out encouragingly:** You may find some people tend to speak more and give their opinion more than others. In order to encourage others to speak, you could say something like, "You have some great thoughts, Mergatroy. Does anyone else have any thoughts?" Or, "Heathcliff, you are

being quiet, I am sensing that maybe you have some interesting insights. What are you thinking?”
(Names have been made up to protect the innocent!)

7. **Contribute economically:** You can add your thoughts as the leader, but it is important that everyone gets a chance to speak up. Allow others to answer first.
8. **Begin promptly:** Since the time for discussion is short, you will need to gather the individuals together and begin promptly. Keep the socializing down to an absolute minimum – there will be time for that during the meal and snack time. We want to maximize the learning time.
9. **Conclude timely:** You will be notified when there is five minutes left in the discussion session. Please bring things to a conclusion and encourage promptness in repositioning for the next round of teaching in the large group. It is easy to see the discussion as being so important that you will be tempted to continue past the time. But, if you do, remember, you may be keeping your group from hearing the start of the next teaching session.
10. **Record summarily:** You may want to ask for a volunteer to write down some of the conclusions (if appropriate). If there is time, we may give opportunity for sharing with the larger group.
11. **Question freely:** Record on a separate piece of paper any questions that arise for the speakers. If time permits, we may be able to answer these over the live feed.

First discussion session – ice breaker

At the first discussion session take a few minutes to have everyone introduce themselves. Ask for names, home church and ministry involvement. If you all already know each other, then ask, “What are you hoping to get out of this conference today?”

Feedback

The organizers of the conference would greatly appreciate your feedback on:

1. How did your discussion session go?
2. Which questions would you change, which were good questions, which were not so good questions?
3. Suggestions for improving these discussion times.

Conclusion

We are praying that the Lord would use you to lead your discussion group to great knowledge, wisdom and spiritual insights into being an improved leader for God.