

*Everything
you wanted
to know about*
**HOME
GROUPS**



A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK
AT THE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION
OF HOME BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

DWIGHT MOSS

Everything You Wanted to Know About Home Groups

A Comprehensive Look at the
Organization and Operation of
Home Bible Study Groups

Dwight Moss

SEVEN
INTERACTIVE

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First Edition

Published by Seven Interactive

1702 Villa Circle

Lebanon, Tennessee 37090

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Cover Design: Edward Crawford / Crawford Design

Cover image: edge69 on iStock by Getty Images

Sofa Icon: Flaticon.com

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ISBN: 9798372272125

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Dedication

To my wonderful wife, Zannie, whose support and encouragement for decades have allowed me the opportunity to grow, learn, and apply small group principles while I was still learning. And to the many patient mentors and teachers from whom I have had the pleasure to learn.

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Preface

In 1984, my pastor asked me to teach a new young adult Sunday School class that was to be started from the one in which Zannie and I were members. Little did I know that this would move me to a path of which I had never dreamed. I am sure those who left the comfort and great teaching to which they were accustomed to sit under my totally untrained and inexperienced teaching at times questioned their decisions.

My lack of skill and experience, however, not only caused me to learn how to teach more effectively—it also opened a door I would have never seen, let alone walked through, otherwise. After about a year of teaching and seeing our class grow, frustration began to well up inside of me. I knew there was more to learn about teaching and being a good Sunday School leader but I had no idea where to go beyond my limited, pre-internet research.

My frustration boiled over at times to my wife, Zannie. One day, as I was venting to her about the lack of training offered by our church leadership, she wisely made a suggestion from her Nominating Committee perspective: “Our Sunday School director is only filling in until we can find someone else. If you don’t like the way they are doing it, why don’t you do it yourself?” After giving it some prayer and thought, I agreed to take a position I knew absolutely nothing about—much less than I knew about being a teacher, at any rate.

I began reading everything I could get my hands on related to leadership and the specific responsibilities of a Sunday School director. I was introduced to some of our earliest Southern Baptist Sunday School heroes such as J. M. Frost, Arthur Flake, J. N.

Barnett, and A. V. Washburn. Additionally, I had the opportunity to sit briefly under the training of Harry Piland a few years before his death.

I was introduced to and formed wonderful relationships with Wayne Poling, David Apple, Daniel Edmonds, Tim Holcomb, and Mark Miller, who I consider true mentors in my path into ministry. Men like Bill Taylor and Allan Taylor took the opportunity to open doors for me that I never could have opened on my own.

As my journey continued, I even had the opportunity to help plant a church in the Seattle area with my family. My pastor, Scott Brewer, took one of the greatest gambles of his life by appointing me as the bi-vocational Minister of Discipleship. This launched me into learning about home Bible study groups—or “Share Groups,” as we called them.

As our time in Washington came to an end and we moved back to our home in Tennessee, God gave me a definitive call into full-time vocational ministry and nudged me to finish my degree in Christian Education from a local Bible college. From there, I expected churches to be standing in line to have me join their staff as a Minister of Education.

After a period of being humbled and allowing His timing to become my desire, we made a move to Alabama to join the staff of a great, growing new church. This stretched me tremendously. But when that chapter was over and a move to another new church took place, the adventure into home Bible study groups really took off.

In the pages that follow, you’ll see the manual—in a slightly modified form—that I put together to help meet the needs of our home groups at that time.

That particular adventure served its specific purpose and came to an end. My present desire is that what I learned, and put on paper, will help you and your ministry.

Introduction

From a need within our own church, we started several Bible study groups in church members' homes. Alternative locations you might consider include restaurants, workplace break rooms, office spaces, and so on. A Bible study group can actually be held anywhere, as long as people have a desire to meet. Groups that meet in homes, however, face some particular issues that need to be acknowledged and dealt with before the group even begins.

In my case, our church needed to start home Bible study groups (Home Groups) for several demographics—those serving during our Sunday School time, those who had to work on Sundays, and even as outreach for friends, family members, and co-workers who would not attend activities on a church campus for whatever reason. Starting Home Groups also might be wise for those who have limited on-campus meeting space.

For whatever the reason you might need to start Home Groups, between these pages you will discover things I found to be helpful in guiding our groups; you, very likely, will need to tweak my suggestions to fit your own particular situation.

In dealing with Home Groups, you should learn much while understanding there will always be much yet to learn. As you progress in the growth of this ministry, I expect there will be changes, improvements, adaptations, and new ideas that come to light. Everyone in Home Group leadership should agree to use the current model chosen by your church leadership. The growth and health of your groups will depend on how well you and your leaders live out what is set before you.

“Hometown Local Church” (HLC) is the name of a fictitious church used here; however, the principles and guidelines are specific to the education/discipleship ministry of the wonderful church where I was serving at the time of this original writing. The denominational beliefs are not the focus of this book, but instead the focus is the steps that will help your particular church navigate the Home Group world.

My ultimate goal for this book is not to sell a million or even thousands of copies, although I would have no complaint about that. My goal is to help churches, staff, and volunteer leaders grow healthy groups which should, in turn, grow strong disciples and reach people for Christ.

About the Author

Dwight Moss has been involved in Christian education/discipleship focusing on small group ministry since 1984, and has served in numerous leadership positions in the local church, doing denominational work, and training church leaders in Ukraine, Honduras, India, and Nepal. He has served on staff for churches in Washington, Alabama, and Tennessee.

Dwight retired from serving on staff in the local church in 2019 and now serves churches across the country with his ministry, Sunday School/Home Group Trainers by offering staff ministry coaching, church consultations, and training for small group leaders.

He and his wife Zannie have been happily married since 1974 and now live in Middle Tennessee, where they are actively involved in their local church.

You can order print, audio, and video training materials by contacting Dwight by email at dwight@dwightmoss.com, or by going to his website, www.SSTrainers.org, where you will also find many free resources.

You can scan the QR code below to go directly to www.dwightmoss.com for many free training videos and articles, DVD resources, as well as a description of other services we provide such as consultations, coaching, and training for your small group team.



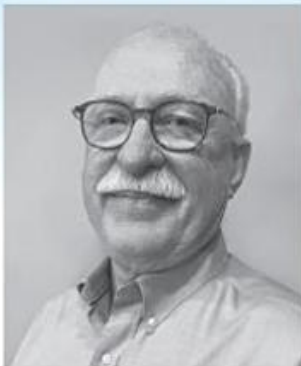
FROM A NEED WITHIN HIS OWN CHURCH where he served as Christian Education/Discipleship Pastor, Dwight Moss started several Bible study groups in church members' homes. Other locations a church can consider for such groups are restaurants, workplace break rooms, office space, etc. A Bible study group can actually be held anywhere people have a desire to meet. Groups that meet in homes, however, face some very particular issues that need to be acknowledged and dealt with before the group even begins.

In Dwight's case, his church needed to start home Bible study groups (Home Groups) for several groups of people—those serving during Sunday School, people who had to work on Sundays, and even as outreach for friends, family members, and co-workers who would not attend activities on a church campus for whatever reason. Starting Home Groups also might be needed due to a lack of on-campus meeting space.

Whatever the reason for starting Home Groups, in these pages you will discover insights, suggestions, and tips that will be helpful in launching and guiding your groups.

In dealing with Home Groups, you will learn much while acknowledging there will always be much more yet to be learned. As you progress in the development and growth of this important ministry, expect changes, improvements, adaptations, and new ideas coming to light.

You, My Friend, have an exciting time ahead of you!



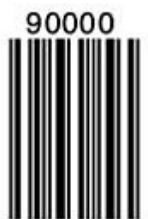
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