

## Christian Leadership Support Groups (CLS Groups)

**Christian** – These support groups are for Christian leaders involved in leading congregations and involved in running Christian ministries throughout Chester and the surrounding area.

**Leadership** – These are open to all adult leaders female and male, young & old, senior leaders, elders, curates, city wide ministry leaders and other key leaders. They are for those who have some form of significant leadership role or future leadership role within the Christian ministry context in this area.

**Support** – This broad inclusive word allows the CLS Groups to hold to core principles but within that framework to be shaped and developed as each group decides. The aim being for each group to establish a rhythm and pattern of meeting that provides genuine relational support to those involved.

**Groups** – The aim is to meet in groups rather than one-to-one and for each group to contain between 4-7 leaders (Ideally 5-6). These groups will meet once a month.

### CORE PRINCIPLES/VALUES THAT UNDERPIN CLS GROUPS

**Honesty** – As leaders we all need a safe place to share our hopes, challenges and vulnerabilities. We need to learn and continue to grow in the level of honesty and openness that we have between one another. As we demonstrate honesty and vulnerability it will encourage other leaders to join and may permeate through to our congregations as well.

**Trust** – What's shared in the group stays in the group. There is no room for gossip. For the groups to function effectively there needs to be total trust between the members.

**Accountability** – In sharing there is inevitable need for some level of accountability. This is not instigated by any leader in the group (groups do not have a leadership structure in this sense) but is initiated by the individual if and when they chose that they want to be held accountable for something God may be encouraging or challenging in their life.

**Friendship** – Ultimately we want to be friends with each other. Food is great as a context for getting to know one another and enjoying fellowship together. Most groups meet for breakfast but perhaps lunchtime or even dinner may suit other groups. The importance is to get to know each other and allow Christ to bond us at a deeper level of friendship.

**Prayer** – Spending time sharing prayer needs and then praying together is perhaps the major element of most groups. We don't preach to one another but listen, sometimes share thoughts but most often just pray and seek God's wisdom and breakthrough in whatever issues are raised.

**God's Word** – Some groups may chose to have a structured time of study but this is not to take away from ensuring some time is given over to sharing and prayer. It is a predominantly a support group not a bible study group.

**Time** – If someone commits to a group then it should be a top priority in their diary. We have to commit time to one another and whilst there will be exceptional times when attendance is not possible it should be as infrequent as possible. It is also encouraging to give one another support through emails, texts and conversations throughout the month.

**Grace** – Personal situations and weaknesses will be shared and during these times the phrase 'but for the grace of God' is so relevant. We are not there to judge one another or gloat because we are not struggling in the same way. Tomorrow it could well be you 'but for the grace of God'. We encourage and exhort one another toward a life fully submitted to Christ. We don't judge each other when we fall but instead pass on the same grace that we receive daily from God.

**Challenge** – Scripture speaks about us having relationships that help in the process of sharpening one another in the faith 'iron sharpening iron'. We need to live this out and when we are struggling or facing personal challenges we not only seek to support and encourage and empathise but also lovingly bring challenge to one another. This is most effective where friendships and relationships are strong.

**Honour** – We commit to talking well of each other and the churches and ministries we lead. Any issues/concerns will be discussed face to face in the first instance. We will not publically criticise one another.



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