

Importance of Using “I” Statements In Our Small Group Ministry

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Each month as a topic at our Facilitators meeting, we focus on one of our basic guidelines for keeping small group ministry effective. Last month we focused on the importance of making ‘I’ statements. We do this not only as a part of our check-in, but throughout the whole meeting. After a topic has been presented each member of the group reflects on it and then shares their unique experience. Their statement begins with “I...”

The importance of this guideline is that when “I” statements are used, the group becomes a place of real sharing and sincerity.

When it is an “I” statement it is a personal witness to your own life. This invites respect then for the person who is speaking. When it is the “real” person sharing, there is an honoring of their truth. In a church where we honor diversity, another’s sharing of his or her sincere thoughts is a gift to one’s life.

Sometimes groups get into advice giving where statements can begin with “you”. Sometimes, there are statements that create distance and start with “they.” It is best to speak from “I”, specifically owning and describing your own experience.

One person speaks at a time while the group listens. There should be no interruptions while the person speaks and little questioning from others, except for something they want to clarify. This process allows the expression to come from within, without fear that someone will correct or advise the expression. The speaker stands alone with the truth of their own experience. The speaker is allowed to speak from insides rather than getting directions from outside.

We hope that this will encourage our group member to trust themselves and to allow what is there to emerge. It is alright for someone to not speak in the group. Sometimes there is nothing to say or nothing to say, yet. We want to be careful that people are not speaking to please others, but listening to themselves and others.