

Triads: “How do we spend our time?”

By Rev. Dr. Doug Ward (Doug is a friend who helped me come up with this idea. He is running this in his Church)

This will evolve as time wears on and is somewhat dependent on chemistry of those involved and our own expectations.

Raison d’etre: The reason we do this is to build some natural community contact with others who are walking the same road. This is our normal pattern as believers – to walk with a few to hold fast to our faith, hear what God is about in our midst, and pray for one another.

Time: This will vary but for the average begin with 30 – 40 minutes and ramp things up from there. Each person can briefly check in with how they are doing at the moment and what may be playing out in their lives. This could include one highlight from the weekly readings (jot a few notes down as you go through the week), or an insight you garnered through silence or fasting. At the conclusion perhaps a prayer item from each person and someone to lead in prayer or pray for one another.

Time - to reinforce: Agree on a closing time at the beginning of the meeting. In my own world this is very important. It encourages us to watch the clock and make sure we have allowed everyone some equal space to speak and still honor other commitments that have been made. Please give group members permission to leave after the agreed upon period. If you want to stay and chat...great...but agree that it is alright to leave the meeting if you have some other commitment. This suggestion may sound harsh but over time will streamline your time, and deal with your expectations.

Sharing: “I’m not great at sharing or praying out loud.” Take a chance at this. It is alright to actually say that to your small group and lean into it gradually. For the more talkative folk in a group – ratchet back a little, or a lot, and make sure the conversation is balanced – drawing out some who are a little quieter. I know this can be a little intimidating but work at it as a group.

Confidentiality: The assumption is being made that confidentiality is maintained in the small group unless permission is granted to share some things with others. This may seem rather unnecessary for some but to allow for some honest reflection and a safe place for all of us this must be maintained. Small groups should always be “safe but not soft”. This allows people to grow in trust and deepen their relationships without any fear of sensitivities being violated.