

# What to Expect at a Home Friendship Group Meeting

*An Outline of a Typical 1 Hour Meeting:*

- 1. The group begins with refreshments and friendly conversation.**
- 2. We open the meeting with prayer, then a member reads the goals and guidelines to the group.**

**FOR EXAMPLE, THE HOME FRIENDSHIP GROUP GOALS ARE...**

- **TO GROW IN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:** Our goal is to know and follow Jesus Christ: To accomplish this goal, each of us should experience "New Birth" in Jesus Christ, complete a Bible Study, and in time a New Life Discipleship Course.
- **TO GROW IN RELATIONSHIP WITH EACH OTHER:** Our goal is to love each other as we love ourselves. To reach this goal, each of us should look for ways to care for our fellow group members, and find a place to serve in the Body of Christ.
- **TO GROW IN NUMBER TO 15-20, MULTIPLY, THEN GROW ANOTHER GROUP:** Our goal is to reach out and invite others to join our group. As a part of this goal, we will all be actively preparing ourselves for the task of facilitating a Home Friendship Group, or assisting therein.

**THE HOME FRIENDSHIP GROUP GUIDELINES ARE...**

- We will all share equally in the ownership of the meeting. Therefore, we will all participate in hosting meetings from house to house on a weekly to bi-weekly basis.
- Sharing will follow the general rules of brevity, appropriateness and courtesy.
- We will refrain from "Chasing Rabbits" (Chasing Rabbits is telling stories that are not relevant to the topic or subject of discussion.)
- We will all be responsible for the care of the children in our group.
- We will attempt to be transparent with one another and keep matters shared in the group in strict confidence.
- We will attempt to bring people that are seeking and then be sensitive to their growth level.
- We will attempt to be as faithful in attendance as possible and let our Home Friendship Group Servant know in advance when we cannot attend.
- We will strive to be punctual so we do not interrupt the meeting by our late arrival.
- We are a Christian Friendship Group. Therefore we will reach out to our friends with the goal of helping them grow in their relationship with God.

- 3. After reading the goals and guidelines, we then take turns answering an "ICE BREAKER" question ("designed to break the ice").**

**EXAMPLE "ICE BREAKER" QUESTION:**

*"How often do you talk to yourself out loud?"*

- 4. We share testimonies (personal stories of what God is doing in our lives).**
- 5. Specially selected scriptures are read, and then the group leader reads the topic.**

**EXAMPLE SCRIPTURES AND TOPIC:**

**SCRIPTURES:** Jeremiah 1:4-7, Romans 10:8-10, 17, Philippians 4:13

**TOPIC:** SELF-TALK

When people hear the term “self-talk,” they often think of someone standing in a grocery store, having a little discussion with themselves over which kind of soup to buy. Yet, there’s much more to self-talk than this. In many ways, the human brain is like a computer. The brain receives, processes, stores, and acts on the input it receives from the senses in much the same way that a computer receives programming, processes it, stores it, and acts on it. Like a computer, our subconscious mind simply accepts what is programmed into it, whether or not the information is true, accurate, or helpful.

In our godless society, much of the programming we received growing up was of the negative variety—largely based on criticism. Consequently, our subconscious mind became permanently etched with negative thoughts that hinder us the rest of our lives. This is the main source of negative self-talk, whether we speak it aloud or entertain such thoughts in our mind. The good news, however, is that we can reprogram our mind with positive messages about ourself. The problem with negative self-talk is that we tend to believe the harmful things we say. The Scriptures we read earlier in Romans, Chapter 10, instructs us to confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead. This shows that what we confess, we tend to believe.

For this reason, instead of saying, “I’ll never be able to do that,” we ought to say, “I’ll keep trying until I succeed.” This principle comes from Phil 4:13 which says: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Positive self-talk is based on faith and hope, while negative self-talk is based on doubt, which is a lack of faith. In many ways, self-talk is self-fulfilling prophecy. The person who says, “I can’t” has two strikes against them before they begin, and the person who says, “I can” speaks words of faith, which always is better than doubting.

The only danger with positive self-talk is that, if misused, it could lead to pride. It’s fine to say, “I can” in hope, but it’s wrong to boast, “I can” in pride. Just the same, we contradict the Bible when we say, “I can’t (do something),” because Phil 4:13 says, “I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST, which strengtheneth me.” Another reason for not using negative self-talk is that it displeases God. When Jeremiah called himself a child, the Lord said, “Don’t say that.” Likewise, God became very angry with Moses after he repeatedly put himself down and asked the Lord to get someone else to free the slaves. (Exodus 3:11, 4:1, 10, 13).

As the following illustration shows, negative self-talk often reveals a bigger problem than a poor vocabulary: While walking through the streets of Hong Kong one day, I came upon a tattoo studio. In the window were samples of the various tattoos available, such as flags, anchors, mermaids, and the like. However, the tattoo that struck me like lightning had the words: “Born to lose” on it. Astonished, I entered the shop and asked the Chinese tattoo artist, “Does anyone really have that terrible phrase, ‘Born to lose,’ tattooed on his body?” “Yes,” he replied. Still shocked, I said, “I can’t believe that anyone in their right mind would do that.” At this, the Chinese man tapped his forehead and said in broken English, “Before tattoo on body, tattoo on mind.”

**6. After reading the topic, the group leader will ask a few questions (as time permits). No one is MADE to answer the questions, but all are given an equal opportunity to “share” with the group.**

**EXAMPLE TOPIC QUESTIONS:**

**A. Many people aren’t even aware that they use negative self-talk. Why do you think this is?**

(\* Most negative self-talk comes from negative feelings that are deep in our subconscious mind. They merely are repeating what they’ve heard before.)

**B. What benefits could a person gain from using positive self-talk?**

(\* If we really believe, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me,” then there’s little we cannot do, providing God wills it.)

(\* Research shows that those who use positive self-talk have improved their self-confidence and self-esteem, and made many improvements in their life.)

**C. What are some of the negative self-talk names and phrases you’ve called yourself in the past, and please tell why you said such things to yourself.**

**D. How can a person stop using negative self-talk, and start using positive self-talk?**

(\* Awareness is the key. Namely, start listening to yourself talk or think, and become consciously aware of what you say to yourself at all times.)

(\* Next, phrase everything that you say to yourself in *positive terms that state the kind of behavior you wish to attain*. For example: Regarding personality:

- “I have a winning personality. I am friendly, enthusiastic, warm, and real. I am the kind of person people like to be around.”
- “I am genuine and sincere with everyone. I treat everyone I meet with courtesy, respect, deference, and consideration.”
- “I am sincerely interested in others, and it shows. People are important to me, and I let them know it.”
- “One of the reasons people like to be around me is that I always make them feel good about themselves.”
- “I always allow others to express themselves completely and freely. I am attentive and encouraging anytime anyone talks to me.”

**E. To what extent do you believe Phil 4:13 which says, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”?**

***7. After questions, the group prays, and the meeting is finished***

***(Approximate meeting time: 1 hour)***