**Guidelines for Group Participants**

* **Confidentiality.**It’s for everyone. Your group should be a safe, grace filled environment and what is said in the group stays in the group. No one wants to find out he/she has been the subject of gossip or well-meaning "prayer discussions." Boundaries are crucial, and this one is vital to the health of your group.
* **Discussion involves everyone.** To make this work, everyone needs to participate as a listener and as a speaker. If you are an extrovert and have lots to say (that’s good, God made you that way!), keep in mind the quieter member of the group and give them time and space to share. Silence is OK! Please understand that the focus of your sharing should be pertinent to the group’s discussion.
* **Life is Hard, Be Kind.** This is where boundaries live for small group community. We are here to grow, to encourage and to love one another. Avoid dismissing the thoughts of others, don’t laugh at others when they’ve shared (unless they’ve just told a joke), and no putdowns of any kind. These are the actions that make others "shut down" and feel uneasy about sharing. Be aware that it is not the group’s task to “fix” one another’s issues (no advice or telling them what they should do), but to acknowledge them and to listen.
* **It’s OK to disagree.** If you disagree, do it kindly – we’re all on a journey figuring things out, and we’re all in different places with different histories and wounds. If the group has differing thoughts on an issue, there's no requirement that everyone agree. After a reasonable time of discussion, the leader could state that it's time to leave this point unresolved and move on to another question or activity. No one should have his or her feelings hurt if others don't share all the same opinions.
* **Prayer is for you.** We know you care for your family, friends, neighbors, etc… but we want prayer to be personal. How can we pray for YOU?

**And one last suggestion...** Please place your cell phones on silent before the group begins!