

Eagle's Nests

Small Groups ... where people learn to soar

The Eagle's Nest is a simple, powerful tool for individuals who are serious about living lives fully devoted to God. It has been developed from Jesus' words in Matthew 18:20: "where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst." The Eagle's Nest is a way for individuals to experience this powerful promise. It involves two or three people of like mind gathering regularly to share honestly, to speak to God, and to listen for His voice. These individuals open themselves to personal growth – allowing them to move away from old patterns and to be transformed by the renewing of their minds (Romans 12:2). The goal is for each person to discover what life can be like when lived in full submission to God's will.

Honesty among group members helps to break down barriers and creates a safe place for dealing with the real issues in their lives. Therefore, Eagle's Nest group sessions focus on struggles and weaknesses as well as strengths, goals and progress in targeted areas. No one in the group needs to be an expert. Great skills are not required. This is different from groups or studies designed around one person being the teacher and others being the students. In Eagle's Nest groups, all members are learners as they work to address their own issues. In the process, mutual discipleship takes place – with each person learning from the other and all moving to a higher level of living.

The Nesting Process ... encouraging deep, lasting growth

Get Together

In an Eagle's Nest, two or three individuals of the same gender agree to meet weekly for at least one hour. They share their spiritual journey with one another. They learn about love by being in relationship. They discover principles and insights for living by being in relationship. They learn about honest self-evaluation and facing personal issues by being in relationship. They support and encourage one another and hold each other accountable for personal growth. They discover the great value of one or two trusted friends.

Get Real

Living a self-centered rather than a God-centered life is what the Scripture calls sin – and causes us to fall short of experiencing the best that God offers. For this reason, it is important for group members to carefully examine their lives in light of God's word. Then, when the group meets, members share an area in which they are falling short and the desire for them to surrender that area to God – based on a completed Life Transformation Worksheet. There is power in honest sharing and in respectful listening. This means that Nest-mates do not excuse, judge or give advice. Getting unhealthy thinking behaviors out in the open helps to destroy denial, minimizing, and blaming others and helps in the process to remove these blockages to growth. This kind of confession, and the resulting experience of forgiveness, offers release of guilt and shame. Submitting to God and letting Him take control makes it possible to get past old, self-centered ways.

Note: It is very important to always maintain confidentiality in Eagle's Nests. A breakdown in confidentiality will destroy trust and the effectiveness of the group and may cause serious damage for each member.

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Get Truth

Group members will read the same passage of Scripture for a week. It is very important for each member to "soak" in the selected passage between meetings. This means reading the passage each day, reflecting on what it says and asking God to speak and then being open and ready to listen. The intent is for each person to hear what God is saying about that individual's life. This is not a traditional Bible study with set questions to answer for a given book or chapter. It is beneficial for each member to keep written notes about learned truths. Some of these notes may be part of a Life Transformation Worksheet.

Get Connected

Group members pray together. Prayer is a communication with God, so it involves talking and listening. Members typically say whatever they want to say to God, remembering that He is present with them. Simplicity, honesty and sincerity are the traits that are needed – no special words or tones are required. Prayers may be spontaneous or written and may involve praise, confession, petition and/or intercession. A time of listening is also important. Members sit quietly before God, allowing His words to be heard and accepted. The aspect of listening prayer is often overlooked, it is important to incorporate and practice this discipline in private – while studying Scripture and throughout the day.

Get Corrected

Getting corrected is significant. Nest-mates turn insights into action. It is recommended to write down on a Life Transformation worksheet the steps it will take to make a change from doing something "my way" to doing it "God's way." Small, specific steps that can be done successfully are encouraged. Nest-mates may want to report to one another during the week between meeting on their progress. Unhealthy habits may have been developed over a long period of time and a step-by-step road back into God's will is often what it takes to achieve healthy living.

Building New Nests ... multiplying discipleship and evangelism

The purpose of the Eagle's Nest program is to encourage personal growth and mutual discipleship as well as to reach out to new persons who desire to know God. During the weekly prayer time at each meeting, it is important to ask God to bring persons to the Nest who need to come to Christ and/or who may need a safe place to be encouraged. When the group is ready for a fourth person to be added, the group multiplies into two groups. The process of multiplication is basic to the effectiveness of Eagle's Nest grouping. Multiplying gives new individuals the opportunity to join while keeping the benefits of a Small Group gathering of only two or three people.

Life Transformation Plan

Each person in an Eagle's Nest develops a Life Transformation Plan. This Plan helps to evaluate life patterns and current circumstances. It helps envision how God's way would make a difference. It helps to develop an actionable strategy for change. The Plan is tied to specific areas of life as described as spokes on a wheel.

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God is the hub. The spokes are:

- 1) Basics
- 2) Work
- 3) Money
- 4) Time
- 5) Family
- 6) Friends
- 7) Emotions
- 8) Faith

Each Nest member asks God to give insight and understanding as we all seek to answer the following questions for each spoke of the wheel:

- 1) **My Way** – How have I handled this area in the past? How has it worked?
- 2) **God's Way** – If God were at the center of my life, what would it look like?
- 3) **Stepping Stones** – What specific actions will help me to grow?
- 4) **Potholes** – What messes me up on my journey? What keeps me from making good decisions?

The Life Transformation Plan is a personal growth tool. It will change as each person reads Scripture, prays and spends time with others on the same journey.

A Few Guidelines

1. Build friendship. Have fun. Schedule other activities outside of the regular meeting time to develop a bond. Always Nest with members of the same gender.
2. Meditate in Scripture – at least 20-30 minutes per day. Read with openness to let the Scripture passages speak to you about your life. Take notes and dwell on the message to you throughout the week.
3. Be open and honest with your Nest-mates about gaps in your life between where you are in a specific area and where God is leading you to go.
4. Faithfully complete Life Transformation Worksheets. A regular rhythm of doing worksheets will intensify, deepen and accelerate the growth process.
5. Pray together. Always include prayers of surrender and obedience. Always pray for a new Nest mate to join.
6. Maintain absolute confidentiality. Do not share Nest news with your spouse or another prayer group. Only with the expressed permission of the owner of the issue can you share any of the discussions that you have in your Nest.
7. Listen carefully to each other but avoid sympathizing. There are several sides to every story. Nest mates are not judges or rescuers.
8. Do not give advice. Even if you are asked, it is usually better to ask questions to help clarify or encourage the Nest-mate to weigh/explore alternatives and consequences of a decision.
9. Limit the Nest to three persons. When a fourth person is to be added, multiply into two groups. Be careful not to shove someone out of a Nest too soon or to keep the Nest intact too long. There are many potential people to reach, and the multiplication process is a great way to reach out to others.

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Life Transformation Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Nest-Mates _____

Target Area (circle): Basics Work Money Time Family Friends Emotions Faith

Describe **specific** incident, situation, conflict or temptation: _____

1. My self-centered way of dealing with this is to:
2. Results have been (including other area or spokes of my life affected):
3. God's way (healthy living/goals, What Would Jesus Do?):
4. Results would be:
5. Potholes (things that trip me up/that I must absolutely avoid in this area of my life):
6. Root Causes (reasons I have had difficulty in this area):
7. Strengths I have to build upon (character, friends, skills, desire):
8. Stepping Stones (specific steps to take):
9. My prayer of surrender:
10. Key Scriptures to help me:
11. Progress journal: