



Creating Biblical Community

A new community was formed on the Day of Pentecost – a community of Christ-followers who were mutually accountable as they reflected the loving character of God. Our Neighborhood Bible Studies also can become Biblical communities where ministry takes place, members provide fellowship and support, and God’s truth is taught and lived out.

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people” Acts 2:46-47.

This vibrant, life-changing community of neighbors is the outcome of focusing on three goals for your NBS:

- Creating a comfortable, safe environment where women can grow spiritually in Christ-likeness as they study the Bible together;
- Building a loving community that encourages the development of trusting and caring relationships with one another;
- Encouraging members to multiply this life-changing experience by reaching out and sharing the grace they have received with other neighbors.

When your NBS members meet for the first time, they may not know each other well or at all. As they build relationships and friendships over time, the group becomes a caring community where women share and process what they are learning. They also help each other understand how to apply God’s Word to their lives.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching” Hebrews 10:24-25.

This dynamic takes time. Some groups take longer than others, but as you pray and implement a few ideas listed below, you will help create a Biblical community of neighbors. Feel free to choose from among these four categories as they best apply to your group’s needs. Don’t try to accomplish all of them!



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1. Ideas for Creating a Safe, Comfortable Environment:

- **Cast your Vision:** Let your NBS members know from the first meeting that your desire is to create a comfortable environment to study the Bible, build meaningful relationships, and encourage growth by inviting others.
- **Explain the Value of Confidentiality:** Talking about confidentiality at the beginning of your NBS allows the women to feel comfortable to share. We encourage you to also cover this in your Mission Statement.
- **The ABCD's of Discussion** also helps establish your environment of safety, trust, and comfort.

A- Audible (be loud enough for all to hear)

B- Brief (statements not stories)

C- Christ and Content Centered (stay focused)

D- Discuss without Division (avoid politics, denominations, or controversial issues)

2. Ideas for Encouraging Lively Discussion and Participation:

As the facilitator, you set the pace and tone for discussion and sharing. Even though your role is to encourage group discussion, in the initial meetings you may need to answer some questions yourself to get the group to open up. Be transparent; share what God is teaching you, admit your faults, and be honest. When you share openly and briefly, you model good discussion for your group. As trust and friendships grow, your women will become eager to participate.

Begin your study with relationship-building exercises:

- 15 minutes of coffee and visiting at the start of each study allows members to connect and form friendships.
- During initial meetings, start your time by asking each woman to introduce herself. You may want to use one or more Conversation Starters to begin the relationship building process.
- Divide into pairs or small groups of three to four women. Allow them to discuss a question and report back to the group. Many women who are reluctant to share in the larger group will learn to share in a smaller group.



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3. Ideas for Creating a Caring Community inside your NBS:

To help women grow in Christ-likeness, they should be encouraged to care for one another within the NBS.

- Meet physical, tangible needs of members by providing meals during an illness, etc.
- Spend time with the women outside of study time. You may periodically plan a group lunch or coffee, or connect with women personally to get to know one another better. This can be as simple as a phone call, text, email or note.
- Host a couple's potluck dinner.
- Plan special gathering at Christmas and other times during the year.
- Create activities for children, so mothers can visit.

4. Ideas for Outreach to Others Outside of your NBS

As women grow in Christ-likeness, encourage them to reflect Christ's heart for their neighbors:

- Most new NBS members come because a friend invites them. A good visual reminder is to place an "empty chair" in the room. Challenge the women to pray that God will lead them to invite neighbors to fill the empty chair.
- Encourage your members to invest in the lives of neighborhood women and invite them to NBS.
- Each year as you begin a new study, send invitations or flyers out to all neighbors.
- As an NBS, host an outreach gathering for your neighborhood such as a Christmas coffee and encourage the women to invite one friend.

♥ Continue to encourage your members to pray, care for, and build bridges of friendship with neighbors not attending the study. The desire of NBS2GO is that the door would always be open and the women would be inviting their neighbors to come, throughout the year.