



How to Boost Connect Group Attendance

Having a problem getting your Connect Group members to consistently show up? This common struggle can quickly frustrate facilitators and cause burnout. But there are steps you can take to encourage stronger commitment and more consistent attendance. Try some of the following steps:

Pray. Prayer is our most powerful and most effective weapon. Ask God to bless your group and your leadership. Request that He watch over members who routinely miss group and provide help and healing (if necessary).

Share ownership. By delegating responsibilities, you give members a sense of purpose. Assign a different group member to bring treats/snacks each week, or to come prepared with a fun icebreaker question. This not only lightens your load, but it also holds members accountable; if they miss group (especially at the last minute), they're affecting everyone in the group, not just themselves.

Apply the study to their personal lives. Help each member answer the question, "What does this lesson have to do with me?" Rather than simply study historical context and talk about what happened in the Bible, discuss what it means to everyone currently and what they can/will do as a result of this information. Engage members by helping them realize how this week's study affects them personally.

Follow up. If a member misses without previously alerting you, follow up with an email, text, or phone call. Rather than accuse them of missing, earnestly try to understand what's impacting their attendance. If it's due to a sickness or personal matter, offer prayer and let them know the group is excited for their return whenever they're ready and available.

Evaluate your leadership. Are you doing enough to keep everyone involved and engaged? How can you better encourage discussion and participation? Do you need to prepare more each week coming into the study? Can you specifically ask less engaged members questions to better involve them in the conversation? Pray and ask God to reveal ways you can better connect with your members.

Hold members accountable. When your members agreed to join a small group, they committed to a season of a determined length. Lovingly remind them of this commitment in a way that doesn't condemn but encourages them to keep their word.

Meet in a common place. Some members, especially ones new to the church, might not feel comfortable entering a stranger's home. Consider meeting at a quiet restaurant, coffee shop, or park to create a relaxed atmosphere in an unthreatening space.

Engage members throughout the week. Reach out to group members throughout the week. If they had a prayer request that week, send them an email or text to let you know you're praying for them and/or ask about the outcome. Ask about what's going on that week or let you know you're thinking of them. Try to engage members one-on-one rather than through a group text or email; doing so feels personal, while group communication can become annoying. These personal connections can deepen your relationship and increase buy-in.