

## **GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS** **USING DEOVOX IN A GROUP SETTING**

### **Preparation:**

They say there is no substitute for preparation. And that is certainly true. However, we are aware at *deovox* that life is extremely busy, so we have designed *deovox* as a resource that can be used with minimal preparation, that can be supplemented further, if a leader so desires. We suggest a few tips that will help in preparing a leader to guide a *deovox* group discussion.

- 1) **Use *deovox* yourself.** It is highly recommended that the group leader is using *deovox* for personal devotions. Visit the Individual page for guidance on how to do this. This will provide a head-start to the episodes.
- 2) **Read the group study guide before the meeting.** If the study guide contains verses to look up, it's worth looking them up before the meeting, so you know what's coming. If you want to add more of your own, feel free to do so. Where there are options for the group to choose, make your choice before the meeting, if you wish.
- 3) **Do some background reading.** (If time!) On the "Further Reading" page, there is one book that is a featured book, and highly recommended for further reading. If it is possible in your budget, buy the book. It is a book that provides an additional insight into the book of the Bible we're studying, and will help in preparation. Eg. For Matthew, Tom Wright's book, **Matthew for Everyone**, is an excellent supplement.

### **Leading the group discussion:**

We recommend the following format:

- 1) **Prayer.** As with all Christian meetings, inviting God to guide hearts and minds towards the truths He is teaching is extremely important.
- 2) **Read the passage.** The passage will be read out in the episode, but it's worth hearing it twice. Use whatever method your group is used to. Have one or more readers read the passage.
- 3) **Hand out the study guides.** They can be downloaded off the catalogue page, where they're listed next to each episode. They're called "group study guides." You will need to have printed out sufficient copies for everyone in the group. There are spaces for writing, so have pens/pencils available also. Always have at least two extras, in case more people turn up. Have the group read through the study guides quietly. This prepares them for the episode they're about to hear.
- 4) **Listen to the *deovox* episode.** You will need a computer with speakers or an mp3 player plugged into speakers for the group to be able to listen. Check your technology well before the meeting, so that you don't end up with egg on your face!
- 5) **Work your way through the study guide questions.** There are normally five sets of questions. Pay attention to your time limits, and move the discussion forward, when necessary. Depending on how you lead your group, you are, of course, free to spend as much or as little time on each set of questions. Eg. If discussion is lively and profitable on a particular topic, allow God to guide you in deciding when to move on.

**A word on writing during the group discussion.** If you find that everyone starts writing and the group goes quiet, you'll need to ask everyone to stop writing. Different groups respond in different ways. Take charge of the group and politely request that they do their writing later, if the writing is disrupting the group discussion.

### **A few tips for leading group discussions:**

- A) **Ensure confidentiality** of all the group members. Tell them this before you begin running the group.
  - B) **Respect differences.** Christians don't always agree. That's okay. Right at the beginning, ask everyone to respect each other's opinions.
  - C) **Set a time-limit.** Without this, your group will turn on you very quickly. Some may have kids, babysitters, etc. This is the only area of life on which it is acceptable to become religious! Aside from a mighty earth-shattering move of the Spirit, the discussion *must* end on time.
  - C) **Ask open-ended questions.** Questions starting with how, what, why, or "tell me what you think about . . ."
  - D) **Avoid one person dominating** discussion by targeting the next question on the list at someone on the other side of the room. Don't ever dominate the discussion yourself. Groups are not a place for leaders to preach.
  - E) **Don't be afraid of silence.** Eventually, someone will speak.
  - F) **Encourage. Encourage. Encourage.** People talk more in safe environments where the group leader shows that each participant's contribution is valued.
  - G) **Trust God.** Trust that God will lead the discussion to the areas that He desires. Don't force discussion about subjects that make the group uncomfortable. Exercise good judgement.
- 6) **End with prayer.** When time is up, it's up. Don't overrun the discussion, so that prayer is an afterthought. Prayer is a vital response to what the group has learned. Ensure sufficient time for prayer. In addition, do not allow the "sharing of prayer needs" to take so much time, you only have a minute or two for prayer. Good time management by the leader is essential.

We pray that the Lord will guide and bless you as you use *deovox* in a group setting. If you have any suggestions or feedback you'd like to send, please send it in. [office@damaris.org](mailto:office@damaris.org) is our e-mail address.

Be blessed.

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