

## Relational Aims

To insure the healthy development of a small group it is good to establish membership responsibilities. Each group will want to think through their own list of expectations at an orientation time or as they begin their life together. The following list, taken from “Covenant to Care”, by Louis Evans, Jr. and “How to build a small group ministry” by Dr. Neal McBride provides a guideline concerning group relationships.

1. **The Aim of Affirmation and Acceptance:** I pledge to accept you no matter what you have done, are doing, or will do. I may not agree with your every action, but will attempt to love you as a child of God and do all I can to express God’s affirming love. I need you.
2. **The Aim of Availability:** Everything I have-time, energy, insight, possessions-are at your disposal if you need them...to the limit of my resources. As part of this availability, I pledge to meet with you in this group on a regular basis.
3. **The Aim of Prayer:** I covenant to pray for you in some regular fashion, believing that our caring Father wishes His children to pray for one another and ask Him for the blessings they need.
4. **The Aim of Openness:** I promise to strive to become a more open person, disclosing my feelings, my struggles, my joys, and my hurts to you as well as I am able. The degree to which I do so implies that I cannot make it without you, that I trust you with my problems and my dream, and that I need you. This is to affirm your worth to me as a person. In other words, I need you!
5. **The Aim of Feedback:** I will try to mirror back to you what I am hearing you say and what you are feeling. If this means risking pain for either of us, I will trust our relationship enough to take the risk, realizing it is in “speaking the truth in love that we grow up in every way into Christ who is the head” (Eph.4:15). I will try to express this feedback in a sensitive and controlled manner, in keeping with the circumstances.
6. **The Aim of Sensitivity:** Even as I desire to be known and understood by you, I pledge to be sensitive to you and your needs to the best of my ability. I will try to hear you, see your point of view, understand your feelings, and draw you out of the pit of possible discouragement or withdrawal.
7. **The Aim of Confidentiality:** I will promise to keep whatever is shared within the confines of this group. I vow not to push you to share things about yourself that you would prefer to keep undisclosed.
8. **The Aim of Accountability:** I consider that the gifts God has given me for the common good should be liberated for your benefit. If I should discover areas of my life that are under bondage, hung up, or truncated by my own misdoings or by the scars inflicted by others, I will seek Christ’s liberating power through His Holy Spirit and through my partners in this group so that I might give to you more of myself. I am accountable to you to become what God has designed me to be in His loving creation.