

# GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS

## INTRODUCTION

### I. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE LEADER

#### A. Initiating

1. *Guidance of transition*
2. *Ask questions*
3. *Getting something started*

#### B. Information input

1. *To stimulate group thinking*
2. *Clarify*
3. *He gives input by providing resources*
4. *Linking*
5. *Reflection*

#### C. Regulating

1. *Setting and maintaining goals; having an agenda*
2. *Keeping on track*
3. *Turning questions asked him back to the group*
4. *Question wrong conclusions*
5. *Summarizing*

#### D. Climate making

1. *Listening with understanding*
2. *Treating contributions with respect*
3. *Tension relief*
4. *Supporting and encouraging*
5. *Handling the overly aggressive*
6. *Encouraging expression of personal feelings*
7. *Harmonizing and integrating emotions*
8. *Knowing everyone's name*
9. *Remembering what everyone has said and how they feel*
10. *Drawing in the maximum number of participants*
11. *Encouraging minority views*

#### E. Decision making

1. *Resolving controversy*
2. *Recognizing and allowing for conflicts*
3. *Seeking consensus where needed*
4. *Assisting individual decision making*

### II. GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

#### A. Questions have three main functions in a discussion:

1. *They start a discussion*

2. *They redirect discussion, emphasize the point or they bring new thinking to bear on a topic*

3. *They support a participant and encourage him in self-revelation*

B. Not all topics are suitable for use in group discussion

1. *Is the topic recognized by the participants as significant and related to the business of Christian living?*

2. *Can it be stated in the form of a question that cannot be answered by "Yes" or "No"?*

3. *Is the topic narrow enough in scope to encourage focused exploration and to discourage broad abstract generalizations?*

C. Five different types of questions

1. *Fact*

2. *Meaning*

3. *Concretizing*

4. *Balance*

5. *Response*

D. Questions prepared by Interservice Christian Fellowship

1. *Observation questions*

2. *Interpretation questions*

3. *Application questions*

### **III. VARIATIONS ON A DISCUSSION GROUP**

A. Neighbor nudging

B. Circle response

C. Role playing

D. Buzz groups

### **CONCLUSION**