



Group Leader's Guidelines for "Chic Chats"

Thank you for being a facilitator during this important time for Pastors' Wives!

Your role as a facilitator is to get women talking and discussing areas of concerns/joys/hurts/fears/celebrations in their lives. As a facilitator, our hope is to make ladies feel at ease, comfortable knowing they are among friends and this is a "safe" time to laugh, cry, or share whatever is on their heart. A friendly smile is extremely helpful to set a tone. Greet each woman warmly when she walks in the door. Make her feel welcomed!

Explain the simplicity of this time, using any or all of the open-ended topics listed on the sheet. You may point out that there is a bit of scripture tied to each topic, but that does not need to be read aloud. Participants can read that for themselves. There is no particular order to the topics. Also, the topics vary widely. Encourage the ladies to read through them, and if something is on their heart and they want to share or talk about, they should do so. Emphasize that the group meeting is a time to encourage and share with one another. No structure to our time together.

Suggestions for You:

- 1) The start is the hardest part. Everything else should flow out of it. We need you to "get the ball rolling" by choosing one of the topics ahead of time. Please pick one of them, read it, and perhaps comment or suggest a personal thought, experience, and then ask for others to give their experience and/or feelings about that particular topic.
- 2) Your role is to ask, not tell. Let the group members examine, discuss, and share together. Feel free to participate but don't feel you must lead the discussion.
- 3) Be mindful of the topic. If the conversation is getting repetitive, and not moving, then switch gently to another, asking, "Does anyone have a comment about another topic listed? Anything you are struggling with? Is there something you want to talk about relating to a different topic?" That is usually enough to get the ball bouncing again in another direction.

4) People remember best what they discover and verbalize for themselves. Some people are naturally shier than others, or they may be afraid of saying something “wrong”. If the discussion is free and friendly and you model showing real interest in what other group members think and feel, they will be more likely to speak up. Sometimes in groups a participant may not want to discuss. That’s OK. Ask God to help you draw out the quiet one without putting her on the spot. If some are silent, but you have a sense they may want to share something, ask, “What do you think, Maggie?”

5) If a question comes up that can’t be answered easily, look to the group to come up with an acceptable reply. Some things simply cannot be black and white . . . lots of gray areas. That’s OK.

6) Don’t be afraid of silences. Some ideas take time to form and people need time to gather their thoughts and courage to speak. If silence persists, rephrase the question.

7) Don’t let one person dominate the discussions. Everyone needs a chance to “take the floor” in talking. One way to do that is ask an open-ended question directly to the group or to an individual wanting and waiting to say something.

Finally, at the end of the time together, conclude with a group prayer. Please lead a prayer to lift up the ladies present, relating to what was on their hearts. Jot down short notes during the discussion if you need help remembering particulars. Seek God’s wisdom, guidance, help, and praise Him for his faithfulness and unconditional love, for example. Please pray for them individually. Hands held together in a circle, or praying individually is fine. Whatever the group is comfortable with.

Thank you for being a friend and for showing your love during this group time!