

Comments on X/Y—an example of “in good shape”

February 12; 6:00 AM

Overall

-The group has good chemistry and most or all members seem comfortable. Group members make good comments and respond well to each others' comments. X ran things well and Y was appropriate in the secondary role. Class participation and time management were solid, but could be excellent with a few tweaks here and there. Good stuff!

Time Management was good to very good.

-Details: Open/MV 6:00; I Jn 1-3 starting at 6:06; I Jn 3-4—6:19; I Jn 5 thru III Jn—6:24; Phil 1-2—6:29; Phil 2-3—6:37; Phil 3-4—6:38; article 1—6:44; article 2—6:50; article 3—6:58; Q #1—7:01; Q #2—7:13

-It was good to skip Proverbs given the time.

-Excellent pace through the Reading, but too much time on the articles and question #1 (29 minutes) vs. the study questions based on Scripture (7-12 minutes?). If I was guessing, it seemed like you had an agenda/schedule for the reading, but nothing *within* the study portion. Be more strategic about the components of the Reading and Study—not just the two big sections.

Class participation was very good.

-Everyone had spoken by 6:25. Excellent!

-That said, by the end, it looked like a trend had emerged where Don, David and Kenny were relatively quiet. If that's the norm, then tweak this a bit, asking them into the discussion (directly) at times. (Y did this with David later.)

-In a related point, the discussion in question #1 was busy and David tried to get in twice. So, here's another opportunity: try to be especially sensitive to occasions when the quieter guys are trying to get in.

-By the end, Karl was showing an ability to get rolling. If this is a norm, you might need to scale him back a bit. At one point, X redirected a comment (his?) to Karl, but that's a perfect op to go elsewhere (“Kenny, what do you think about that?”).

-At least today, I would have liked slightly fewer comments from X, leaving more time for your group members. If I had to guess (and I only have one data point!), it seemed like the default was wanting to say something substantive—instead of a few of those, but mostly moving on to the next guy's comment. In a word, don't feel like you need to comment on their comment. Often, you're better off just moving along, offering some encouragement here and there, etc. Nothing big here, but I'd tweak this a bit to buy yourself some more time for other discussion points and more participation from group members.

Memory verse was very good to excellent.

-New verse was perfect.

-Review verses were a sample—two guys on each. (Do you mix this up or find yourself going to the same wells week after week?) Three of four were, again, perfect before Byron broke the streak. (Is he usually ok or does he need a little private/public exhortation?)

-No discussion of verses, but may have been covered in study.

Smaller things:

-All present were punctual, but compared to my roster, you were missing Walter (did he ever join you?) and Steven (is he still in? if so, did you have a report to give on his whereabouts and would you encourage him to attend another class that week?).

-Very good for X to follow up on Kenny's comment by encouraging him on the spiritual disciplines he's doing in DC!

-Another small thing: I'd use clean breaks between the reading passages—e.g., Phil 1-2 and 3-4 vs. Phil 1-2, 2-3, and 3-4.

-Good for Y to note a future memory verse (I Jn 4:2).

-In the discussion on "false motives" (Phil 1:18), the cleaner application would have been to our perspective on a church or pastor who viewed Southeast as a rival. In such cases, you could also imagine the rival interpreting our struggles as a sign that we were outside of God's will (as Paul's rivals may have inferred from his prison stay).

-Wow! Derek gets into the Greek with comments on I Thess 2:7—presumably something from last week's discussion.

-Good suggestion to read articles (or do other aspects of the study) with one's wife.

-Is Don as comfortable in the group as the others? I met him through our Spiritual Disciplines class—where he was relatively quiet. But this morning, he seemed distracted (tired?) at times.

-I was trying to figure out David's name and Byron could not tell me whether his name was David or Steven. In 201, they don't know each others' names? Hmm...

-Y alluded to a different approach to prayer at the end, but I didn't stay long enough to see it. Glad to know you're pursuing some variety on that!

Comments on X/Y—an example of “needs work”

(January 11; 6:00 AM)

Overall:

Class participation was solid and could have been excellent with a few tweaks. Time management needs to be addressed. The co-leaders were effective; the group has good chemistry (including a good balance of humor); and the group members all seem engaged.

Class participation was good to very good.

-It was good to bring people in (three times). But when you did, you twice chose people who had already spoken quite a bit! That's a great time to choose the quieter ones (as you did with Andy the one time).

-Very good participation from all except Scott and Mike B. Scott got in three times—low, but within range. Mike B. got in once—not enough.

-I wondered if where you sat made a difference. Scott, Mike, and I were out of (or on the edge of) your visual range—at least the way your body was pointed. I'm not sure whether the three of us were out of sight to you, but Scott and Mike may have *felt* out of sight. In any case, try a different seat and/or work harder to look at (or point your body toward) those who are outside your view.

Time management was ok to good.

-The details: 6:06 for Col 1-2; 6:23 for Col 3-4; 6:31 for Lk 1-2; 6:40 for Lk 3-4; 6:45 for Lk 5-6; 6:52 for article 1; 7:03 for article 2; 7:05 for Q #1; 7:15 for Q #2; 7:17 for Q #3; 7:20 for prayer; with a 7:28 finish.

-I couldn't tell if you were on a schedule (if you were, it needs adjustment!), but I could tell that you were trying aggressively to move things along. It might be helpful to tell them (again) what the schedule is; they may have the impression that so much discussion on the reading is your goal. To spend appropriate time on the study, you might have to just stop the discussion of Bible reading at 6:40.

-The trade-off is, always, good vs. best. For example, an early tangent was Jim's anecdote about the Christian Academy speaker's comment. You can let that go (and I would have too), but the result is that other, future tangents must be curtailed.

-If I had to pick a week where I would reduce the amount of time dedicated to the study, this week would be at or near the top of the list. That said, the study was still short-changed—28 minutes vs. the 40-55 minutes called for. Beyond minutes, it would have been *quite* valuable to have more conversation on #2b-c (although this was hit on to some extent by Danny) and especially #4-5—the toughest parts of doing this well.

-It's a small thing, but to save some time and reduce the number of times you need to crack the whip, you can increase the number of chapters per “section” and thus, reduce the number of sections (e.g. Luke 1-3, 4-6 will take less time than Luke 1-2, 3-4, 5-6).

-Likewise, hitting one (or two) Proverbs was a good way to shave off a few minutes.

-Spent too long on prayer, especially given not enough time on study.

-X has good presence and seems comfortable; Y was a nice compliment and appropriate in the co-leader position; with one possible exception, the group members seem comfortable with themselves, the co-leaders and each other.

-Richard and Ross bring a lot in terms of substance that contributes to group chemistry; Danny and Mike D. bring a lot of really solid substance.

-It was interesting that Mike B. only spoke once and, voluntarily, jumped in with that particular comment. Moreover, I thought the answers to him went well, but he might still (reasonably) feel awkward. In such cases, I would get him back into the conversation quickly—so that he can make a non-awkward remark. And I'd drop him an email or call this week—to encourage him, etc.

Smaller comments:

-started two minutes late; everyone was on-time with two people missing (Jerry accounted for; make sure to follow-up with Chris; has this been a regular problem with him?); Danny left early (is that common?)

-creative on the memory verse (one word per person)

-some of your words may have sent signals you don't want: "Who's got II Peter 3:18?" sounds like one might not need to have that verse in hand; and later, you asked Andy "did you have anything on...?" (vs. "what do you have on...?")

-nice intro to the Bible reading in Colossians and Luke

-Richard had a cool comment about protons on Col 1:17's "hold together"!

-you did a nice job in leading discussion on Jim's anecdote and the *huge* question that followed about Christian vs. Catholic and handling the differences

-likewise, you did a nice job with Mike B's question—keeping it open, getting others to respond. It would have been good to connect it back to our earlier discussion of Col 2:16.

-Jim had a very cool observation that Jesus' first recorded words were two questions!

-I like what you did with the first article—directing comments around his first point (what you wanted to emphasize), before opening it up to his last three points.

-Observation: Mike B. had all of his book filled out (thoroughly); Richard only had the reading and Q #3. Interestingly, Richard made the comment about DC stretching him—and maybe he can wing the warm-up questions, but...

-Within the prayer requests, it was good (and at least occasionally necessary) to follow up with Andy on his previous request about his family's adoption.

-It might be more effective to have one-on-one prayer—at least some of the time—to develop intimacy and "biblical fellowship"!