



For people between jobs  
And those who want to help.

## *Church Handbook*

*" . . . if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" 1 John 3:17*

*[www.5959groups.org](http://www.5959groups.org)*

## *59:59 In Your Church*

We have tried to make 59:59 easy to start and maintain from a church perspective. You will need a coordinator to organize informational meetings and to place people in groups. If you would rather not coordinate groups from your church, you can send people to the 59:59 website where they can register to be in a group. We will then try to find a church in your area that does coordinate these groups. Remember, this is non-denominational and we are trying to help people who are hurting.

People can learn about 59:59 online and they can register for a group on the website. If you have a designated coordinator at your church, please e-mail their name and e-mail address to [5959groups@gmail.com](mailto:5959groups@gmail.com). That way, when people register online your church will automatically receive the names of people that wish to be involved in 59:59 at your church.

You can also work with other churches in your area. If your church has 3-4 people who wish to be in a group and another church in your area has 3-4 people feel free to make a group using both sets of names.

Because there is no "official" leader in each group we do suggest you have an admin person in each group. This is the person who will communicate with the church coordinator to disperse information such as large group seminars, multi-group functions or other practical matters.

If you do wish to have informational meetings at your church, following is an example of what can be communicated.

### *The 59:59 Informational Meeting*

Once a 59:59 coordinator (on staff or volunteer) has been identified, you have to talk with others to let them know about 59:59. This can be done by placing a notice in the church bulletin or newsletter. An example of a notice is:

WHAT IS 59:59? It's a mutual encouragement/support group made up of either men or women (half employed and half unemployed) who commit to meet weekly until all are employed. It's an hour of time for people who are willing to give and people who want to receive encouragement. Come to the information meeting today at 1:30 p.m. in Room 223.

The introductory meeting should start promptly and last no longer than 59 minutes and 59 seconds. This reinforces to participants that time is a valuable commodity.

Following is an example of a narrative for the introductory meeting:

*We are here today to determine the level of interest in forming a 59:59 group. Before we get started, let's go around the room and give brief introductions.*

*Have you ever been in a store where no one asked if they could help you? You need assistance, but there is no sales person to be found. Eventually you find a clerk, interrupt his personal phone call, and you're told, "Sorry, that's not my department".*

*Well if that hasn't happened to you, then maybe you've been in a work environment where there was someone who never does more than minimal requirements; someone who allows a phone to go unanswered on a co-worker's desk because it wasn't their job to answer it.*

*We know two things about people like this:*

- 1. Their work ethic always improves when the boss is around, and*
- 2. We would never, ever think that we would be in this group.*

*That is in our work lives. Sometimes that is a perfect description of our spiritual lives, too. It's unfortunate that many of us don't help when we can, or don't answer the call because we know someone else will - someone more qualified.*

*Being without a job has a profound impact on a person's psyche. In many cases, his ability to communicate with his friends, his family, his God, and even himself are severely impaired. The actions of true and faithful friends can help ease a burden that otherwise may appear to be too heavy to bear.*

*There are many sources available to help people get a job. 59:59 will not attempt to replace or diminish the value performed by these services. 59:59 will direct itself to the emotional reinforcement needs of our unemployed friends by pooling unemployed with employed (preferably those who have experienced career trauma themselves). A small group of six to eight, half employed (left siders), half unemployed (right siders) agree in covenant to meet once a week at a predetermined time and place for 59 minutes and 59 seconds. The purpose of these on-going meetings is to provide interaction, reinforcement, encouragement, candid appraisal, individual and group accountability; a vent for frustrations and an opportunity for service by concerned friends.*

*The commitment to your 59:59 group may last a month, or several months . . . until ALL member of the group are gainfully employed. At that point, the*

*group may disband. NO ONE should sign a covenant unless he is prepared to match his commitment to the needs of every member of his group. Would you have it any other way? Distribute a copy of the 59:59 Covenant to each person.*

*As a small group, the individual dynamics will play an enormous role. The success of each group must be the responsibility of each individual in the group. For that reason, no one person should assume the mantle of leadership. The responsibility of conducting the weekly meeting should revolve from one to the next with no member excluded; no leader . . . no followers . . . just friends helping friends during a difficult time. This is not to say that meetings should have no structure. A sample agenda is provided, but each group should discuss their own goals and establish their own agenda, then adhere to it.*

*A Bible reference that relates to what 59:59 is all about comes from 1 John 3:17, ". . . if any one has the world's good and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?"*

*We have a sign-up sheet which I'll pass around now. If you are interested in committing to 59:59, please complete the information on the sign-up form identifying which days of the week are best for you and what time of day, either morning or evening. Once there are enough left and right siders to launch a new group, someone will contact you about the location and time of the first meeting. Groups are assigned on a first come, first serve basis. Men meet with men, women meet with women.*

*To facilitate communication among the 59:59 groups, we use a network. One person in each group is the point of contact.*

*There are a variety of activities in which 59:59 groups are involved. For some, we have large group meetings on the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. for one hour to address group needs, update groups, and make announcements. There are spouse support groups that meet weekly as well.*

*There is a 59:59 Voice Mail Hot Line available for announcement. Call (770)641.5597 for information.*

*What questions do you have?*

Before people leave, insure that the sign-up sheet has legible and complete information.

*Thank you for coming today.*

## *Sample Letters/E-mails About 59:59 Group*

*This is a sample networking letter when informing other churches about 59:59*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

The consequence of hard work has provided many Americans with an abundance unknown in most of the world. Our current recession, however, has rewarded many professionals with early retirement mandates, layoffs, and dismissals. Dedicated men and women are being forced to confront career trauma which has devastating impact to their economic as well as psychological well being. In many cases, the side effects of this crisis severely impairs the ability to communicate with family, friends, prospective employers and even God. At this point, the actions of true and faithful friends can ease a burden that might otherwise appear too heavy to bear.

It is natural for people to turn to the Lord when confronted with unmanageable frustrations. Further, it is our Christian duty to respond to the needs of our brothers and extend the invitation of comfort to those who are unchurched as well This is the reason for 59:59.

59:59 directs itself to the emotional reinforcement needs of our unemployed friends by pooling unemployed with employed in small groups. Each group agrees in covenant to meet once a week for 59 minutes and 59 seconds. The purpose of these meetings is to provide a confidential forum for interaction, reinforcement, encouragement, candid appraisal, individual and group accountability; a vent for frustration and an opportunity to serve for those so led. 59:59 needs the blessing of the hosting church, but because of the autonomy and size of the groups, there is minimal staff involvement required.

The commitment to the 59:59 group may last a month, several months or longer. This personal commitment is valid until ALL member of a given group are employed, at which time the group formally disbands. No one should covenant with a 59:59 group unless they are prepared to match their commitment with the respective needs of every member of their group.

A natural by-product of 59:59 is, and will continue to be, a strong networking effect on the employment search. If; however, we judge our success by counting the jobs attained, then we have misrepresented our mission because we have inadvertently labeled those without jobs as failures. The success of 59:59 should be evaluated by whether we provide an ear (to listen), hand (to help), words (to console), and a heart (to love). If we meet these criteria, how can we fail?

\_\_\_\_\_ has 59:59 Informational Meetings on the second and fourth Sunday of the month at 1:30 p.m. in room \_\_\_\_\_. You or a representative from your church is welcome to attend or call. We would be glad to discuss having a similar meeting at your church.

Sincerely,  
Your Name

(SAMPLE RELEASE)

For information contact:  
(Knowledgeable Source Phone Number)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### SUPPORT DURING A CAREER CHANGE

CITY, STATE [Today's date, 2009] - [City's] A career support group with an unusual name re-establishes itself after 15 year.

Originally designed to address the emotional needs of unemployed men and women during the white collar recession in the 1990's, 59:59 now includes anyone who is between jobs and needs the emotional support of others.

The group began in Marietta, Georgia in November of 1991 and is now in[inset name of town] at [number] locations with more than [number] people involved.

The purpose of these ongoing meetings is to provide interaction, reinforcement, encouragement, candid appraisal and individual and group accountability for people between jobs.

Members meet once a week for 59 minutes and 59 seconds in small groups of six to eight. When the group begins, half the members are looking for employment and half the members are employed. The employed members have often experienced career trauma themselves and attend to offer their support. The type of support most often needed by those looking for work is emotional.

Often a family crisis will parallel an unemployment period because everyone in the family is facing an unsure future. The small group encounter is a time when people can share both frustrations and encouragement.

Before a group begins, each participant makes a commitment to attend every meeting until everyone in the group is employed. Once all members of the group are employed, the group may disband. Some groups may continue a month while others may last up to a year. The co-founders conceived the idea for a support group for the unemployed last October.

Having experienced job displacement themselves, the founders of 59:59 knew the difficulties associated with unemployment. The men received more requests for help with job searches and emotional support than they could handle.

-more-

They found others who wanted to help the unemployed and began a support group.

Jansen Chazanof, co-founder of the group, says, "We have very little to do with this. The success of 59:59 is entirely the result of those involved in the groups. Without their involvement and God's leading, 59:59 wouldn't exist."

To learn more about 59:59, call their information line at [insert Information Line number].

– *Sending the Release*

- Send the release to business editors of local papers so people will become aware that a support group is out there for those that are unemployed.
- Please tailor the release to fit your situation, geographical area and people.
- Some papers offer a calendar of self help and non-profit group meetings that mention the group meeting times and dates. Call the paper to find how you can be put in the calendar.
- Remember, reporters are on a tight deadline. Not returning a call promptly may result in the loss of a story. Also remember God is in charge of this project, and if He wants *59:59* in the media it will be there.