



For people between jobs
And those who want to help.

Member 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

How 59:59 Got Started

Here's a testimony from a founder of 59:59.

"It was during a men's bible study group in July 1991 that Darrell (not his real name) interrupted and said "There's something wrong here. You talk about Christian things, but it seems to me that many of you leave your Christianity at the door when you leave." Darrell's statement bothered me, so I phoned him later that day and asked if we could meet the next morning for breakfast. Darrell wanted to tell me what he meant so he agreed.

At breakfast, Darrell explained to me that the recession had really hit his construction business hard. Bankruptcy was inevitable. The stress was causing severe problems at home. Darrell's 14 year old son by a previous marriage had left in anger to live with his mother; communication with his wife was brittle and without love or understanding. Darrell's life was coming apart at the seams. I sat there, listening, not knowing what I could do.

The following week I returned to the Bible study. It was there I learned that Darrell was found hanging in his home the night before. Dead to the world and dead to his Lord. We heard his call for help, and we waited for others ... more qualified, to respond.

While discussing this tragedy with a friend, we both agreed that if only Darrell had received the help he so desperately needed the outcome might have been drastically different. My friend and I had both experienced career crises and we discovered that we both made promises to ourselves to help others overcome the problems we incurred. Now we felt we had to do something to prevent another tragedy like Darrell's.

We talked and talked and planned and planned. As we decided that if helping people in this area was part of God's plan of action then we had talked enough and planned enough. Now it was time to listen for God's direction. At that moment a care group program called 59:59 was born.

59:59 Mission/ Purpose Statement

The Mission of 59:59 is to
lead people into a growing relationship
with Jesus Christ.

The purpose of a 59:59 career support group is to provide Christ centered emotional reinforcement to the unemployed. This is done by weekly one hour meetings to provide interaction, reinforcement, encouragement, candid appraisal, individual and group accountability and a vent for frustration and an opportunity for service by concerned friends.

One of the goals of a 59:59 career support group is to provide an encounter with Christ for those who do not know him as their Lord and Savior. Participants in the group provide living proof for Christ's unconditional love.

Value Statements

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

The values espoused by a 59:59 career support group include:

1. **Faithfulness.** To regular attendance or personal contact each week.
2. **Confidentiality.** To maintain privacy in all personal conversations.
3. **Commitment.** To continue to meet until all members are employed.
4. **Honesty.** To be transparent with each another.
5. **Enthusiasm.** To be helpful by showing a positive attitude.
6. **Patience.** To be considerate of the time needed to locate the right career opportunity.
7. **Compassionate.** To be sensitive to the spiritual, physical, emotional, economic, and social needs of participants.
8. **Love.** To be living proof for Christ's unconditional love in the lives of group members.
9. **Understanding.** To discern what is happening in a person's life.
10. **Stewardship.** To be a good manager of the time set aside for 59:59 meetings and the content of the meetings.
11. **Prayerful.** To continually hold 59:59 members up in prayer.
12. **Leadership.** To be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit as the head of the group and to have a servant's attitude.
13. **Persistent.** To consistently exhibit these values throughout the duration of the life of the 59:59 group.
14. **Family.** To be sensitive to the needs of the family and to strengthen and to preserve marriages.
15. **Focus on the Individual.** The needs of the group will be met when individual needs are met, not vice versa.

Glad You Asked About 59:59

How does 59:59 help a family?

If the breadwinner can learn to confront his or her frustrations and fears, he can better lead his family through this difficult time of interruption in employment. *59:59* can help promote communication in the family.

Can 59:59 be used to reach those who are not church members?

We believe the LEFT SIDERS (employed) should be active members of your church. Of course, RIGHT SIDERS (unemployed) will also come from the congregation, but unchurched RIGHT SIDERS are encouraged to participate. Your own church members will exemplify love and compassion that will strongly influence those who are not members.

Can 59:59 help get jobs?

It is not the purpose of *59:59* to secure employment. However, many businesses are responding to *59:59* by providing unpublished employment opportunities.

Who leads the 59:59 groups?

The establishment of a formal group leader is discouraged because it places the organizational responsibility on one person. As a consequence, the group's identity matches the "leaders". With weekly rotation of the facilitator, the group continues to belong to all the members equally.

Are groups separated by gender?

Yes. Communication of personal matters are difficult enough.

Where and when do the 59:59 groups meet?

Because the groups consist of employed members, it is best to have meetings in the early morning (7:00 a.m.) or early evening. The groups elect their own meeting place based entirely on convenience for the members. Most groups choose to meet at restaurants, some in offices; however, we discourage using homes since someone is burdened with "picking up" each week. To encourage participation by non church members consider meeting other than on church property.

Why are the meetings 59 minutes and 59 seconds long?

Because employed members as well as unemployed members must be good stewards of their time, the suggested meeting duration is *59:59*. Usually the initial group meeting is longer because it is a getting acquainted time. If a meeting extends beyond *59:59*, members should feel free to leave.

How do 59:59 groups communicate with one another?

A network has been established with at least one contact per 59:59 group. As job leads, seminars, encouragement ideas and other communication needs arise, the originator passes the information to the contacts who, in turn, disseminate the news to their group members.

What happens if I can't attend a meeting?

Business travel will cause some to miss meetings. Absentees are encouraged to contact their group members by phone or drop a note. Those with heavy travel schedules should consider that before making the commitment to 59:59.

What do groups talk about?

Whatever is important at the time. To keep meetings focused, a suggested agenda is provided and individual agendas are recommended.

What about spouse support groups?

A great idea. . . as well as church sponsored career seminars, financial seminars, networking classes and more. No project, however, should be considered until a leader within the groups is identified.

Are then any fees associated with joining a 59:59 group?

No.

The First Meeting of Your 59:59 Group

For a variety of reasons, this group has agreed to commit to a 59:59 group. This is not a casual decision and should not be taken lightly. Your group will start developing its own personality from this very moment. In order to insure that everyone has the opportunity to benefit, we suggest that you make this a memorable meeting from which a strong foundation can be built. Please start on time so you can end on time.

Sample Agenda

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 0:00 | All members present |
| 1:00 | Opening prayer |
| 2:00 | Last week's activities |
| 30:00 | Open forum/discussion |
| 50:00 | Needs awareness: personal, spiritual, family, financial...all are important |
| 55:00 | Prayer requests and closing prayer |
| 59:00 | Choose leader for next meeting |
| 59:59 | Have a great week! |

Bottom Line:

The Mission of 59:59 is to lead people into a growing relationship with God.

59:59 Meeting Group Discussion Topics

Philippians 4:19

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

What is the difference between needs and wants?
Who defines what our needs are?

James 4:2-3

You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

What are wrong motives?
What is the right motive?

Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

What lessons can we learn from the above about...

1. Prosperity?
2. Attaining a full life?
3. Having all that we need?

Romans 8:28

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

Who is working?

How able is He?

When is He working?

Why is He working?

What is He working to accomplish?

Whom is He working for?

What must we do to get Him to work for us?

John 14:15

If you love me, you will obey what I command.

How do we show God we love Him?

Is there anything (undone) that God has been asking you to do?

Isaiah 4:30-31

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Note: 'new' means, literally, to "exchange". We give up our strength and gain the Lord's strength.

Psalms 27:14

Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord. (NW)

'Hope' and 'Wait' are often used for the same Hebrew word, depending on the translation. How are they similar concepts?

What does it mean to "wait on the Lord"?

How do we "be strong and take heart"?

How does this apply to the job search?

Matthew 6:25-34

25 Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes?

26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

27 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

28 And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin.

29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

31 So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?"

32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.

33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own. (NW)

Discussion questions:

1. Jesus says "Do not worry". Is this a suggestion or a command?
2. How do we "not worry"?
3. Do we *really* trust God for our food, shelter and clothes?
4. What is the condition Jesus gives us which must be met in order to receive these things?
5. What does it mean to "seek His kingdom and his righteousness"? How do we do it?

Stages of a Small Group

	Group Members' Thoughts and Feelings	Group Members' Actions	Leader's Attitude and Actions	Leader's Planned Activities
1st Stage	Do I belong here? Do they like me? Do I like them? Anticipation, enthusiasm, anxiety, caution.	Give only basic information about themselves. Accept others on a superficial basis.	Warmth, enthusiasm, clear communication about the group's direction.	Use 'ice breakers' to stimulate interaction. Plan informal time with group leaders. Initiate vulnerability Use guided discussion instead of lecture.
2nd Stage	Can I trust these people with my thoughts? What is the direction of the group? Less enthusiasm, impatience, anxiety.	Some stop attending. Some become vulnerable and begin to take on the goals of the group.	Empathy, encouragement, flexibility, honesty. Get to know members more intimately. Continue to give clear direction.	More open sharing. Group prayer. Spend time together outside the group. Group involvement in outreach and service.
3rd Stage	Let's accomplish something together! I like these people. Acceptance, freedom, vision, determination.	More commitment to goals. Mutual encouragement. Willingness to work through conflict. More leadership is developed.	Encouragement, challenge, clear goals, continued enthusiasm.	Members initiate outreach and service. Members begin to lead others. Training in ministry skills. Quality time together outside the group.

Guidelines For a Safe, Supportive Group

Welcome to 59:59. May it be safe and supportive for you. May you be safe and supportive to others.

Confidentiality may not be breached by any member or visitor of this group, for any reason, at any time. Trust is the basis for the success or failure of this group.

1. Speak one person at a time so that all can hear. No side conversations. Listen attentively to the person speaking to the group.
2. Be friendly, warm, accepting, and understanding. Be aware of and avoid discounting and criticizing. We are here to support each other as we change and grow.
3. Listen and understand not just the words but also the feelings that are shared. Be aware of not only what is being shared, but what is not being shared.
4. Recognize, acknowledge, and accept strong needs and feelings. Allow painful feelings to show, not only in others, but in yourself as well, even if the feelings and needs are uncomfortable. Pay attention to what is going on inside yourself as others share, especially the difficulty that you may have with "negative" feelings.
5. Do not deny, repress, minimize, or rationalize feelings that you have. We are here to learn to express and process feelings rather than ignore them and store them up.
6. Speak only from your own personal experience. You are in authority only about yourself and your feelings. Keep your responses personal and be responsible for your feelings, reactions, and suggestions by owning "I feel", "I think", or "This is what I realized/did". Avoid generalizing by using the responsible "I" rather than the general "we".
7. Do not sermonize, moralize, or give advice. Avoid the use of the words "you" or "you should" to try and fix someone. It is not your responsibility to take away another person's pain. It is your responsibility to be compassionate and understanding, supporting them as they grow through their pain.
8. Stay focused on feelings and behavior, not persons. Do not judge.
9. Do not present yourself as having the only answer or feeling that you have to have an answer. There are things we may not understand, but may simply have to accept.
10. Remember, any time someone shares they are taking the personal risk of being known and accepted for who they really are inside. No matter how small the risk taken, they are learning to trust others to be safe and supportive. That risk and that trust should always be affirmed and reinforced by someone in the

group who identifies with what has been shared. You may simply thank them for sharing what they shared, or you may choose to personally respond to the feelings that you experienced as they shared. If you are affirmed and reinforced for sharing, do not minimize your affirmation. Simply reply, Thank you.

11. Avoid touching someone in order to help them through an emotional moment. This may have the effect of robbing them from facing or dealing with important feelings.
12. Again, confidentiality may not be breached by any member or visitor for any reason at any time. This is the most important guideline for a safe, supportive group.