

**Running a Book Club**

There are moments when we want to hone our understanding of a particular topic. There are times when we want to get alongside others in our church to build a team. There can be merit in building relationships with other people by focusing on a topic or task at hand. In all these situations, reading a book together with our brothers or sisters in Christ can help.

But how do we go about a book club?

1. Pick your people

Sometimes we want to be reading a book with people who have roughly the same level of understanding as us. Sometimes we want to be reading a book with people who have far less understanding of a topic than we do. Either is fine but it’s important to know whether the book group is about peer learning or training others. It’s probably best to invite a group of between 2-10 people to join – more than that and it can be hard for everyone to have a voice. And it’s always best to pray about who to invite.

1. Pick your book

Once you know who’s going to be in the group and what the group is for, you can choose a book to read together. Either you can suggest a title yourself, or you can encourage people to share their ideas. It’s best to go for a book that is relatively short and accessible - few people want to be in a book group for more than a couple of months. And it is good to choose a book that feels relevant to where the group members are at (don’t ask them to read something that assumes knowledge they just don’t have).

1. Pick your dates / times / venues

Book groups can meet in person or online – over breakfast, during the day or in the evening. They can meet weekly, fortnightly or monthly. They can read just one book or meet on an ongoing basis and read a library! There’s no one size fits all. You can start by suggesting just one book for a limited time and see how it goes. Aim to meet somewhere convenient where people can feel relaxed and not too overheard by those outside the group.

1. Pick your format

When you meet, you might like to start with a catch up of how people are doing and a prayer. Then offer people the chance to share something that has struck them from the chapters just read. That might lead straight into conversation but often it’s useful to have some discussion questions prepped (and circulated in advance) so people have a base from which to springboard their conversation. BCUK has some ideas you can use. You might also like to include practical activities like role play to ground what you are learning in the book. Finishing with a Q&A can be helpful - there’s often something someone doesn’t understand.

1. Pick your outbox

Discuss what will happen at the end of the book club. How are people going to live it out?