**Facilitating vs Teaching**

**Definitions**

**Teach:** to give lessons about (a particular subject) to a person or group

For most Americans, our group experiences are overwhelmingly focused on teacher/student   
educational experiences. In a discussion group setting, most of us tend to default automatically to a teacher/student educational experience unless we are intentional about avoiding it.

In a discussion group, a teacher will tend to dominate the conversation and will often have an agenda they want to present to the group. This will cause people to close off conversationally and their values and perspectives will not surface. Often times, at the end of the discussion, the   
teacher is pleased because he presented his view, but the rest of the group may feel unengaged.

**Facilitate:** to make (something) easier; to help cause (something)

Some Key Skills to Succeed at Facilitating:

1. Complete the homework and think through potential guide questions before you meet with the group.

2. Ensure your Core understands their support role.

3. Get comfortable with silence.

After you ask a question, consider counting to 10 in your mind before speaking up (one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, etc.). Someone will speak up.

4. Ask follow-up questions - Continuing responses.

As a facilitator, one of your goals is to encourage the group to share about what is going on in their lives. A key facilitating skill to do this is called “continuing responses.” These are simply responses that encourage people to continue sharing and elaborating appropriately. Some examples include head-nodding to show you’re listening and want to hear more; “uh hum”; clarifying what they are saying or meaning; inviting them to elaborate; etc. What these have in common is communicating to the person sharing, and to others who are   
listening, that it is okay to share without the fear of being instructed, corrected, humiliated, scolded, attacked, etc.

5. You do not need to give your opinion to everything said.

6. Address disruptive group members quickly and appropriately.

7. Pray - Rely on God’s power

As you facilitate your group, prayer is the most important thing you can do. Pray as you prepare, pray as you plan, pray, as you lead.