



# Peer Learning Groups 101

## FORMING TOGETHER THROUGHOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

By Ruth Perkins Lee

**A**s a minister, how do you form together? Fellowship? Resources? Best practices?

Within the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, more than 600 people form together through their experiences in Peer Learning Groups. These CBF-sponsored small groups gather regularly as a community to worship, pray, dialogue, discuss books, host speakers, share ideas, fellowship and find renewal.

The Fellowship is home to bright and talented ministers with hearts and passions for ministry, and these ministers are leading congregations in meaningful and creative ways. In order to encourage healthy ministers, healthy ministries and healthy congregations, we as CBF seek to make space for ministers to grow, share and learn from one another. CBF Peer Learning Groups provide a safe space for ministers, who often feel alone in their work, and create communities that can gather for fellowship, shared learning and much needed self-care.

These groups can form around a variety of unifying reasons: common ministries, geographical proximity, specific topical interest, shared general interests, former seminary classmates and beyond. We see that as groups come together and meet regularly, relationships form. Book discussions can lead

to sharing personal challenges and insights. Prayers for group members lead to care and concern for each other's churches. Sharing a meal together leads to celebration of communion in a covenant community.

Most Peer Learning Groups meet monthly throughout the fall and spring, and some gather together for an annual retreat. Many groups meet in person, while there are those that share in virtual community through Skype or Google Hangouts, interacting in person only a few special times each year.

These groups work with our four regional directors, who train conveners, provide resources as needed, facilitate communication, answer questions, offer suggestions, serve as sounding boards and give guidance to help each group to reach its full potential. Every group is facilitated by a dedicated and trained convener who coordinates meetings and communicates with us at CBF about the group's activities and available resources. Each convener receives monthly updates with pertinent information and resources for facilitating PLGs, and new suggested resources for ministers to share with their group.

Peer Learning Groups are a great way to connect with other ministers and create a network of resources and support. If you are

interested in joining the more than 600 PLG members and becoming part of a group, we would love to hear from you! Many groups are open to new members, and we would be happy to connect you to one of these. We are also always looking for new groups to form, and these can be started with as few as five participants. Those interested in forming a new group should submit a proposal form that may be found online at [www.cbf.net/peer-learning-groups](http://www.cbf.net/peer-learning-groups).

We are happy to walk you through this process. The regional directors are a great resource in answering questions and giving guidance in the forming of new groups.

All PLG members and anyone interested in Peer Learning Groups are invited to the Peer Learning Groups Breakfast in June at the CBF General Assembly in Dallas. Information on this event may be found in the monthly PLG e-newsletter. To find more information about a Peer Learning Group close to you, or information about beginning a new Peer Learning Group, contact us at [plg@cbf.net](mailto:plg@cbf.net).



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