

How to Start a BEMA Discussion Group

Who: This is one of the most challenging aspects of starting your own BEMA Discussion Group. The idea is to be able to dig into the Text with other people. That means you need to have at least 2–3 other people (Jews call it a *havurah*) to wrestle with the Text together. You can do this a couple of ways:

- Spread the word. If the BEMA Podcast has meant a lot to you, then it should be relatively easy to share it with others. Invite others to listen and see if they enjoy it as much as you do. Then invite them to listen and dig in together. Boom! Group started.
- Simultaneously, we can list your group as a potential startup on BEMADiscipleship.com. There could be another listener around the corner from you who would love to have some company. We recently had a listener in Portland (big place) get a new job and one of her new coworkers is a fellow BEMA Podrisioner. (What!)

Why: Like we said above, this stuff is so much more powerful with other people. You probably already know this and that's why you're reading this.

When: This is sometimes hard to decide, but whatever you do, find a time to meet that works for as many people as possible. We recommend a set time of the week so it's easy to plan for and remember, but we've had groups plan it week by week, as well (hey, BEMA Missoula). We also recommend a weekly rhythm of meeting as these groups tend to have a much higher success rate than something less frequent.

Where: Pick a place. Any place Listen at home, in the car, at the gym, or whatever. Then meet at a home or a coffee shop — wherever works best.

How: Once you know the details above, just do it.

What: This is the hard part for some groups. The idea is simple in concept and sometimes difficult in execution. You want to listen to the podcast and then discuss any thoughts or questions together. The discussion should drive you into the Text and possibly online to research contextual clues, but can be difficult when you feel lost because your group lacks an “expert” to serve as your guide. Don't let this stop you. Resident guides are overrated, and studying the Text in community is deeply underrated.

Below are some questions I often encourage wrestling with as a group to get you started:

- What are the problems I see in this story? What sticks out to me?
- Is there anything that radically changes by viewing this with eastern eyes?
- What new truth did I learn in this podcast?
- What am I having a hard time embracing and why?
- Who are the characters in this story, and how do I relate to each one?
- How do I see this teaching displayed in my own life?
- What is changing in my life as a result of this lesson?
- What action points do I need to pursue in order to be transformed by this Text?

