

# Setting the Right Atmosphere

Often, the last ten percent of our preparation becomes the first ten percent that people notice.

As a Small Group Leader, sometimes that last ten percent can make the difference between someone committing to a Small Group over the long haul and someone dropping out of a group after one meeting.

Although adjusting your living room's lighting, scent, or furniture arrangement may not seem to have a direct effect on what your eGroup will be doing, it can be the tipping point that allows people to feel welcome, invited, and cared for in your group.

As you set the atmosphere for a welcoming environment for people to feel comfortable, ask yourself these questions:

- What will they see?
- What will they hear?
- What will they smell?
- What will they taste?

## HERE ARE A FEW EASY WAYS TO USE ATMOSPHERE TO CREATE A GOOD SMALL GROUP EXPERIENCE:

- **Brew coffee or bake cookies.** Filling your house with a pleasant smell can make people feel at home. Remember, this is an unfamiliar setting for most of your group members, so anything you can do to welcome them is a bonus.
- **Clean up a little bit.** Spending a few minutes picking up any loose items lying around will go a long way. If you're short on time, remember: God gave us closets for a reason!
- **Provide enough seating for your Small Group.** Having enough seats shows that you prepared for the people in your group, and it makes them feel valued.
- **Eliminate distractions.** Eliminating small distractions like cell phones or noisy pets helps keep group members focused and engaged. Your Small Group hinges on discussion and prayer time, so do as much as you can to control the environment.
- **Keep the new person in mind.** If it's your first Small Group meeting, or someone is coming to your Small Group for the first time, go the extra mile to allow them to feel comfortable. That may mean attaching a balloon on your mailbox to identify your home, using name tags for the entire group, or asking one of your seasoned group members to introduce this person to the group. These small things can go a long way in making the new person feel welcome.