

# Healthy Accountability

## 4.7

Suggested Time:  
15 min

For most people starting out in a discipleship group, accountability is a bad word. If the person has been a Christian for any length of time, they've probably had at least one negative experience with accountability. So what does healthy accountability really look like? Here are some fundamental qualities, along with some tips and examples for working out these characteristics in your group. Healthy accountability is:

### Voluntary

You decide what you want to be held accountable to: someone else doesn't decide it for you. People will always resist (and rightly so!) being held to something they didn't choose.

**Tip:** *This means that it is vital that a person fully understands what they are getting into when they join a discipleship group, and that as a potential leader they buy into the growth plan you develop together.*

**Check-up:** *Did you get buy-in before assigning this task or this responsibility? Do they really want to do this, or is it all your idea?*

### Energizing

When people are held accountable, they should come away energized to follow through on their commitments, not feeling shamed, discouraged or punished. A key purpose of accountability is to supply additional energy to make the change process easier.

**Tip:** *Pair accountability with support and affirmation so it doesn't become a downer.*

**Check-up:** *How do our check-ins affect this person's expression? Are they more "up" or do they look "down" after we meet?*

### Honest

For accountability to be effective, you have to ask the tough questions and tell the truth, and not just slide around what's really going on.

**Tip:** *Great accountability questions are often closed (answered with a "yes" or a "no") and direct. For example, "Did you stick to your diet this week?" A question like, "How is the diet going?" is less effective, because it is easy to weasel out of and not be totally honest.*

**Check-up:** *When holding you accountable, do I know clearly whether or not you accomplished exactly what you set out to do?*

### Consistent

Accountability works best when you know you are going to be asked every week how you're doing. If you often forget or have no structure for regular check-ins, it loses much of its impact.

**Tip:** *Increase the impact of accountability with structure: when will we check in each week, how will we do it (At group? By e-mail?), and what direct question do we want to ask each other?*

**Check-up:** *How many times in the last month have we checked in? Are we being consistent?*

**Purpose:**  
To define healthy accountability and let you check how you function against it.