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Starting a Breast Cancer Support Group

On page 155 of *Dear God, They Say It's Cancer*, I list ways to find a support group in your area. However, *Dear God, They Say It's Cancer* can also be used to start a breast cancer support group. Here are a few ideas for getting the group going:

1. Pick a place to meet that is private and quiet, such as a church or home. The group will be discussing sensitive issues so best not to meet in a public area.
2. Select a day and time to meet. Nights or weekends are best for working women or moms who need Dad to watch the kids. Determine also how often you will meet i.e. biweekly or once a month.
3. Make a flyer on your computer and distribute at the offices of your doctors, oncologists, hospitals and local churches. Ask your church to announce it in the bulletin.
4. You can start with just one other breast-cancer sister. Give flyers to group members and ask them to network and distribute.
5. Set group courtesies so everyone feels safe sharing. For example, unless given permission, everything said stays within the group. No one will try to "fix" another member or convince her to change medications or doctor's treatments.
6. When everyone has a copy of *Dear God, They Say It's Cancer*, first read and discuss together Chapter 10 "Getting Needed Support" on page 145. Then go back to the beginning of the book and read and discuss each chapter.
7. Ask someone to be a co-leader with you for times when you cannot lead the group.
8. Remember that the goal of the group is encouragement and support so steer discussion away from judgment comments or issues that instill fear or doubt.
9. Frequently ask the group for suggestions in how to adapt to their needs. Also consider inviting an occasional speaker or expert in the field of breast cancer.
10. Relax and enjoy how God is using you.