

The Critique Process*

Guidelines for Critiquers:

- Ask God for discernment and sensitivity.
- Find something positive to say about the manuscript *before* making suggestions for change.
- Respect one another's beliefs. Do *not* debate theology.
- Use a check off list to consider various aspects of the manuscripts. You won't help the writer by a casual critique and the comment that "it's wonderful."
- As much as possible, give equal time to all who have manuscripts to read.
- Try to suggest possible markets.
- Strive always to be honest encouragers.

Guidelines for the Person Being Critiqued:

- Have someone else read your manuscript. Hearing your manuscript read aloud is a wonderful way of picking up on problem areas.
- If possible, bring copies of your manuscript. It is often much easier for others to spot problem areas when they can see as well as hear it being read.
- Be open to new thoughts and ideas.
- Listen. Do *not* debate or argue or defend your work.
- Pray about the suggestions you've received.
- Be accountable to work with your manuscript (or with another writing project if you determine the manuscript you have read is not worth pursuing) in order to be a good steward of the group's time.
- "Commit your work to the Lord, then it will succeed" (Prov. 16:3).

* Bagnall, Marlene. *Write His Answer: A Bible Study for Christian Writers*. Phoenix: Write Now Publications, 1999, p. 165-166. (Reprinted with permission from Marlene Bagnall.)

Resources

Below are a few resources for finding critique groups. The list includes Christian and non-Christian groups as well as online and local. Some online groups are closed to everyone but members; some are open for anyone to read. Some groups require a membership fee to join their organization before joining their critique groups. Study carefully to find the right fit for you.

American Christian Fiction Writers: www.acfw.com

Christian Writers: www.christianwriters.com

Critique Circle: www.critiquecircle.com

FaithWriters: www.faithwriters.com/critique-circle.php

Inspire Christian Writers: www.inspirewriters.com

Internet Writing Workshop: www.internetwritingworkshop.org

Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators: www.scbwi.org

Word Weavers International: www.Word-Weavers.com for traditional groups (contact about online)

Lists of Christian and general market groups:

thewritelife.com/find-a-critique-partner/

blog.reedsy.com/critique-circle/

To start a groups.io group: www.groups.io (basic plan free)