

Planning And Execution of A Local Group

Post by "Cassius" of January 8, 2018 at 6:58 AM

Epicurean Meetings and Conventions

New: [Meetup Handouts](#)

Update: As of 2/10/25 as I am writing this, it is my understanding that the Sydney Australia Epicurean meetup group is no longer operational. I have left the links below in case you want to look for prior versions of the page, but at present i am not aware of any operational Epicurean Meetup groups.

In most parts of the world, there are at present very few opportunities for regular people who are interested in Epicurus to get together to meet each other in person. This is a major problem, as Epicurus emphasized the both the value of friendship and the value of students studying philosophy together with like-minded friends..

A significant part of the problem is that there are few mechanisms to help people find their way to Epicurean philosophy on their own. The odds are stacked against regular people doing so in large numbers, in part because the academic world, with help from misguided fans of "stoicism," "hedonism," "humanism," and related "-isms," has labeled Epicurus as a philosophy for losers, misfits, loners, and recluses.

Important steps have been taken in recent years toward freeing Epicurean from the cage of the university classrooms. As a first step toward personal engagement, we now have available to us a Facebook group led by people who share a genuine and primary interest in Epicurus. At the [Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group](#), learning about Epicurus is the true focus, and not just a front or a come-on to some other philosophical agenda. However Facebook is only a part of real life, and many of us who communicate there share the goal of attending local meetings and even conventions on a regular basis.

There are several existing prototypes which provide us a model for future action. In Greece, the friends of Epicurus in [Athens](#) and in [Thessaloniki](#) meet regularly. Their yearly convention and regular meetings are documented on their web page, and these are excellent resources .

In Sydney Australia there is an active "[Meetup group which has existed since 2011 and has proven to be very active.](#)" Check that page for a listing of all their prior meetups, including the agenda they followed for each meeting. What better example for those interested in starting their own local meetings?

Experience indicates that it is readily possible to get together several people in Meetup format who are generally interested in "philosophy." The trick is to find the determination and

perseverance to keep things focused on Epicurus as the theme. There are strong temptations to wander into “atheism” or “humanism” or “stoicism” or even “political activism,” and those distractions must be resisted if the group is to stay focused on Epicurus. There is no membership database of existing Epicureans from which to draw, but it is probable that almost any metropolitan area of any size would support a Sydney-style meetup group if even one or two people act with determination to keep the meetings on track and recognize that attendance will likely remain small for an extended period.

In addition to using the [Sydney Meetup group page](#) as an example for meeting agendas, there are other obvious ways to program a series of meetings. There are several recent books which could be used as a “book club” format to discuss a chapter at each meeting. Haris Dimitriadis' ["Epicurus and Pleasant Life"](#) is well organized for that purpose as a balance between introductory theory and practice. Norman DeWitt's ["Epicurus and His Philosophy"](#) can be used to structure a series of meetings on Epicurean theory, and Hiram Crespo's ["Tending the Epicurean Garden"](#) provides a good way to structure a series of meetings on Epicurean practices.

Because so few embrace the label of Epicurean on their own, a new generation of Epicureans must be developed who will say with Thomas Jefferson that “I too am an Epicurean.” The critical first step toward enlarging those numbers is content creation. Before we can ask others to join with us in Epicurean meetings, we first have to be able to set out ourselves what it means to be an Epicurean and to study Epicurean philosophy..

We already have in place some excellent websites to assist leaning about what it means to be Epicurean. For a simplified list of core Epicurean ideas, see [Major Characteristics of the Epicurean View of Life](#) and the [summary of epicurean philosophy](#) on this website. In addition to the material cited already, Haris has set up [EpicurusPhilosophy.com](#) in support of his book, and Hiram has published his [SocietyOfEpicurus.com](#) as part of his work. Many additional resources are available at [NewEpicurean.com](#)

Local Meetups do not require anything more than [the Sydney Meetup prototype](#), but the more extensive websites can be used as examples for producing pages dedicated to promoting and coordinating local meetup and wider convention activity. For a current list of activist Epicurean websites from around the world, [click here](#). For a great example of what kind of meeting activity is possible, check out this page detailing the [February 2017 Symposium in Athens](#).

Let's get started and keep moving forward! If you are interested in setting up a local Meetup group, or working toward a regional convention, please be sure to let us know by posting at the [Epicurean Philosophy Facebook Group](#).