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SESSION ONE

# A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

## INGREDIENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MEETING

### Exodus 18:13-26

- 1. The Leader prayed for the meeting.**
  - Pray for those you invited. Pray for their health, their marriage, their children, everything!
  - Pray outside the meeting.
  - Pray for those who always have excuses.
  - Pray on the way to the meeting.
  - Pray during the meeting.
- 2. The Leader ministered to those who came to the meeting.**
  - Minister to those who are at the meeting and others will come.
  - Don't rebuke people for low attendance.
- 3. The Leader had invited new people.**
  - Appoint greeters.
  - Introduce people publicly and privately.
  - Everyone's favorite subject is themselves.
- 4. The Leader was not afraid to have fun.**
  - Jesus came to give us abundant life.
  - Be a facilitator of the Holy Spirit.
- 5. The meeting started and ended on time.**
  - Honor people's schedules and time.
  - Make sure you give people an opportunity to leave when they need to.
- 6. People felt warmly welcomed.**
  - Keep a watchful eye for people who wander to the corners of the rooms and stand alone.
  - Make sure you have funny or interesting icebreakers. It is hard to recover from a bad start.
- 7. People encountered God.**
  - God always shows up to a prepared and expectant atmosphere.
  - Be prepared and expectant.
  - Anticipate God's participation in the meeting.
- 8. People received ministry.**
  - First-time visitors usually come to a meeting with a ministry need.
  - Don't let your schedule inhibit you from the most important part of the meeting—ministering to the people!

- Minister in an orderly way.
- Train the members of your group to minister to others.

- 9. There seemed to be a plan for the meeting.**
  - Fellowship.
  - Worship.
  - Word.
  - Prayer and Ministry.
- 10. Many people were involved in the meeting.**
- 11. There was a clearly stated purpose for the meeting.**
  - Cast vision for the meeting.
  - Cast vision for multiplication.
  - Have others share the vision of the group.
- 12. People left the meeting anticipating the next meeting.**

## FOUR MYTHS ABOUT LEADING A GROUP

- 1. I have to be a gifted teacher to lead a group.**

TRUTH: Life Groups are more than just teaching and Bible study. Use your gifts and let others use theirs. If you are not a gifted teacher, let others teach who are gifted in this area. If you love to pray, then pray. If you love to encourage, encourage others in the group. Your unique personality, passions and gifts will make you successful.
- 2. I must have extensive knowledge of the Bible to lead a group.**

TRUTH: Take a team approach when dealing with complex issues in Scripture. Others in the group may know the answer if you do not. It is ok to admit that you cannot locate a specific verse or passage. Tell the group that you will find the answer before the next meeting. Assign others to help you in the search. All of us are on a wonderful lifetime journey of discovering the truths in Scripture and, as Leaders; we should be diligent to study, memorize and meditate upon Scripture. However, advanced degrees in Bible History are not needed to lead a group.
- 3. I have to be a great counselor to lead a group.**

TRUTH: You will not be expected to solve every person's problems as a Leader. We have a team of pastors, counselors and professionals who have been trained to meet with people and minister grace and healing to almost any situation that arises in your

group. We only expect you to pray, encourage and support the members of your group. If you are faced with a difficult counseling issue, contact the church office and allow the pastoral staff to help.

4. **I do not have enough time to lead a group.**

TRUTH: If you have enough time to attend a group, you have enough time to lead. We will help you plan each meeting and delegate responsibilities in order to maximize your time.

## RESPONSIBILITIES FOR LEADERS

1. **Oversee the pastoral care of your group members.**

- Hospital visitations when the need arises.
- Encouragement – Know when to refer them to the pastoral staff for counseling needs.
- Meals for new moms, funerals, illnesses, etc.
- Benevolence needs should be referred to the pastoral staff.

2. **Oversee the weekly group meetings.**

Four components that should be included in each meeting:

- Fellowship
- Worship
- Bible Study/Discussion
- Prayer/Ministry

3. **Arrange for a Host Home.**

- This can be your home or the home of a member in your Life Group.
- Once a host home is determined, then it should remain the same throughout the semester.

4. **Submit bi-weekly reports via the email to the Life Groups Pastor.**

5. **Follow up with guests who attend your group.**

6. **Greet guests during the weekly services at church.**

7. **Follow up with guests as assigned by the Prayer Ministries Coordinator.**

8. **Attend quarterly A.L.I.V.E. meetings and annual Life Groups Training.**

NOTE: Please realize this list can be overwhelming to one individual, but can be easily handled by a team of people. It is critical early in the life of your group to establish a team mind-set and to empower people in your group to minister.

## AREAS FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SERVE IN LIFE GROUPS

-Call guests to the church referred by Prayer Ministries Coordinator.

-Submit bi-weekly reports.

-Serve as the Children's Coordinator.

-Oversee the snack sign-up each week.

-Greet and welcome guests at the front door each week.

-Visit members in the hospital as needed

-Prepare meals for members as needed.

-Coordinate meal delivery and preparation as needed.

-Call people who have missed the meeting.

-Help clean the meeting area after each meeting.

-Serve refreshments at each meeting.

SESSION TWO

# BASICS

## **FIVE LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION FOR LIFE GROUPS**

1. **Surface Communication**
  - Weather, sports, current events, church activities.
  - This is the safest kind of communication.
2. **Factual Communication**
  - Reports, observable facts or ideas.
  - Example: What I did at work this week or where we went on vacation.
3. **Thought-Provoking Communication**
  - A person reveals what he or she thinks or believes about something.
  - An opinion, an interpretation of Scripture or a judgment of someone's actions.
4. **Emotive Communication**
  - A person reveals how he or she feels about something.
5. **Transparent Communication**
  - People share their deepest fears, dreams or thoughts.
  - This might happen when someone shares a personal struggle or sin with the group.
  - For most people, this is the most difficult level of communication.

There are two doorways to Transparent Communication:

### **1. Transparency**

- People must take off their masks and let others see who they are.
- Most of us only allow people to see what we want them to see.
- Transparency requires honesty and your group must have an environment that encourages honest communication.
- Groups without transparency are boring—like a garden that is never tilled.

### **2. Vulnerability**

- Vulnerability is simply allowing others to speak into their lives.
- Many times people want to divulge issues in their lives, but are not willing to allow anyone to help them.
- Vulnerability requires trust.
- The Leader must lead the way. The group will not become transparent and vulnerable until the Leader does.

How can a Leader create an atmosphere of transparency?

- Do not fall into the perfectionism trap. Leadership does not require perfection. This only creates an artificial environment.
- Be honest when you need prayer.
- Delegate tasks to others in the group.
- Give permission for group members to reveal their struggles. You may need to remind the group each week that permission is granted.
- Affirm those who share their struggles.
- Lead the group to commit to confidentiality.
- Do not give or allow others to give “pat” answers to problems. People want to help, but do not always know how. Find a way to get the Holy Spirit involved in every problem.

## **LIFE GROUPS ETHOS**

**Ethos:**

- The absolute beliefs of your culture.
- The fuel of our passion.
- The tribal fire around which we gather.
- A corporate and intense mental state that is held by a group of people.

**Covenant Church Life Group Leaders will build a culture in which the following principles are held in the highest regard:**

### **1. Every person is important.**

- Every person is uniquely gifted. Leaders must make every effort to know the members of their group individually, and equip each member to minister effectively.
- We believe that everyone should receive ministry when needed.
- Allow guests to introduce themselves by “telling their story.”

### **2. Life Groups are priority.**

- Our time, talents and resources will be given to building new groups and equipping the Leaders of groups.
- We believe events are the catalyst for gathering people, but discipleship can best happen through the committed relationships found in community.

### **3. Effective leadership is based on a healthy relationship with God and people.**

- We desire our Leaders to minister from a position of rest.



- We desire our Leaders to minister from a deep reservoir of the Holy Spirit that is found only in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
  - We believe that God designed each of us for relationships, and leadership in the church is based upon success in relationships at home, at work and in the community.
4. **Life Group Leaders should focus on leadership development.**
    - The primary responsibilities of Leaders are to mentor, train and release other Leaders.
  5. **Authentic community is possible.**

*Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near. Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)*

    - We believe that people in our culture should share their lives with others.
    - We believe our time should be prioritized to include significant relationships with other families and friends.
  6. **Covenant Church Life Groups are the net for the harvest.**

*Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples. John 13:35 (NLT)*

    - We believe that life groups are God's best design for assimilating and discipling new believers into the local church.
    - The unchurched are simply looking for authentic believers who truly live for the Jesus they claim to know.
    - If we will intentionally prepare new life groups, God will send us the lost.
4. Help people relax and receive from God, focusing on God and not on you.
  5. Remember that we are a team. If you ever feel blank or empty, ask for help. The Bible teaches that we see in part and know in part. (1 Corinthians 13:12)
  6. Speak prayers of blessing. Avoid counseling.
  7. Always check your personal hygiene so that you will not distract a person. Always have breath mints handy and use them. Dress modestly and be well-groomed.
  8. Be willing to share a prophetic word. These words should always edify, encourage and exhort.
  9. Be sensitive to their spiritual condition. They may need to be saved.

## **THE BASICS of PRAYER MINISTRY**

1. Be prayerfully prepared, expecting the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Ask specific questions about the purpose for which they are seeking prayer.
3. Pray with your eyes open. Be alert to signals that the Holy Spirit is moving upon a person. Concentrate on the person and do not look around.

SESSION THREE

# EQUIPPING OTHERS

## EQUIPPING OTHERS TO LEAD IN YOUR GROUP

### Three questions every Leader should ask themselves:

- Am I doing enough to ensure the success of my Apprentices?
  - Have I invested my time wisely?
  - What is keeping me from what is most important?
1. Ask your Apprentices questions about key issues and value their response. They will think corporately if asked corporate questions. (Mark 8:27-30)
  2. Allow your Apprentices to ask you questions. Refuse to be defensive or insecure. (Mark 8:31-33)
  3. Ask them about their personal faith, their finances and their families. They can only be as successful for you as they are being in these areas.
  4. Give your Apprentices real responsibilities and critique the results. Allow them to make mistakes and learn. Give them responsibilities that are important to you because you will then pay closer attention to the results.
  5. Give your Apprentices consistent personal time. Be accessible. Allow them to periodically have access to your personal domain. Groups should not be the subject of every meeting.
  6. Prophetically proclaim success over their ministry. Encouragement is the most powerful motivator known to mankind.

## LIFE GROUP LEADERS WHO GATHER FOLLOWERS VS. LIFE GROUP LEADERS WHO DEVELOP LEADERS

1. **Leaders who gather followers need to be needed; Leaders who develop Leaders want to be succeeded.**
  - Our impact can stretch further than this generation if we give away what we have to the next generation of Leaders.
  - We don't want a following; we want a legacy—Jesus.
2. **Leaders who gather followers focus on people's weaknesses; Leaders who develop Leaders focus on their strengths.**
  - Do we spend too much time trying to get people to do well at things they are not gifted to do in the first place?

- We should spend our time identifying their gifts and sharpening their God-given talents.
- If you put the right people in the right place at the right time, they will most likely succeed and serve long-term.

3. **Leaders who gather followers focus on the bottom 20 percent; Leaders who develop Leaders focus on the top 20 percent.**
  - Focus on those with the most potential, not those causing the most problems.
  - Hurt people hurt people. Help people get well, so they can lead. Establish this goal early in your group.
  - Put an end to perpetual counseling. People must ultimately wrestle with God.
4. **Leaders who gather followers spend their time; Leaders who develop Leaders invest their time.**
  - Your daytimer will tell the story. It is your portfolio of time investment.
5. **Leaders who gather followers ask for little commitment; Leaders who develop Leaders ask for great commitment.**
  - Raise the bar.
  - Be clear about your standards.
  - Check regularly on their progress.

## MULTIPLYING YOUR GROUP

1. **Cast the Vision of Multiplication**

Why Birth?

  - It's biblical. *Be fruitful and multiply.* Genesis 35:11
  - Shortage of groups.
  - New tasks are needed.
  - Support group needs.
  - New converts/growth.
2. **Identify and Develop Apprentice Leaders**

*And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.* 2 Timothy 2:2

  - Jesus modeled it.
3. **Group Growth**
  - Personal Evangelism.
  - Special church events.
  - New members from church.
  - New guests from church.
  - Community projects.

#### 4. **Birthing New Groups:**

- Sending Birth: New Leader and team are sent out from existing group.
- Releasing Birth: Existing Leader and new team are sent out from existing group.
- New Birth: New Leader and team start a brand new group.
- Turbo Birth: All members become Leaders and apprentices and birth out.

SESSION FOUR

# LEAD WITH CONFIDENCE



## TWELVE KEYS TO TEACHING COVENANT CHURCH LIFE GROUPS WITH CONFIDENCE

### 1. **An effective teacher loves people.**

- We're all about people.
- We should be more concerned about people receiving ministry, than convincing people to agree with our principles.
- People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care.

### 2. **Pray, pray, pray.**

- Jesus often withdrew to lonely places for prayer and meditation.

*Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. Luke 6:12 (NKJV)*

### 3. **Teach the Word, not your opinions. (2 Timothy 4:2)**

- Cultural mores.
- Personal convictions.
- Eternal truths—this is what you should focus upon.

### 4. **Use visuals and illustrations.**

- Jesus always used parables to teach. (Matthew 13:34)
- Use current events, funny stories and personal anecdotes.

### 5. **Please, don't use "Christian-eze."**

- John Wesley practiced speaking his messages to an 8-year-old girl.
- Don't use words like "sanctification," "redemption" and "consecration," unless you can make them easily understood by new believers and seekers.

### 6. **Speak the truth in love.**

- Talk "to" your audience, not "at" your audience.
- Use words like "we" and "us."
- Don't speak a message publicly to a group that is intended to be spoken privately to one particular person.

*... but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head (Christ). Ephesians 4:15 (NKJV)*

### 7. **Teach with enthusiasm—it is a sin to be boring.**

- Your audience will only be half as excited as you are.

*Your passion will produce passion in others. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)*

You cannot represent reality as fiction. We have the words of life to offer people. Speak with life!

- Don't be monotone. Use voice inflections. Know when to pause for effect!

### 8. **It is normal to be nervous—teach in faith.**

- People fear public speaking more than insects, flying in airplanes, sickness or loneliness.
- Pick out the friendliest face in the crowd and speak to them initially. Then begin making eye contact with others.
- Nervousness actually activates the adrenaline supply and makes your eyes shine. It also activates your brain.

### 9. **Speak with authority.**

- You only have as much authority as you are under. *Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Mark 1:21-22 (NKJV)*
- You are speaking under the authority of God and under the authority of the local eldership of your church.

### 10. **Be prepared.**

- Preparation makes you confident, and prayer empowers you. Both take time and cannot be rushed.

### 11. **Be personable.**

Be transparent. Be honest. Share your failures, and your successes.

Your own testimony about the subject matter is the best way to personally connect.

Mention people's names during the message.

People must open their souls before they will open their spirit.

### 12. **Receive constructive criticism.**

- Ask for honest feedback.
- Discovering your weaknesses is the first step to correcting them.





**PERSONAL TEACHING  
EVALUATION CHECKLIST**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I speak clearly and distinctly?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Were the illustrations clear and appropriate?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I speak from my heart?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Was the message of the lesson easy to understand?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Was I enthusiastic?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I teach with confidence and authority?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I hold my audience's attention?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I personalize the teaching?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I have good eye contact with the audience?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I use the appropriate amount of time?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I stay on the original subject?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did I overuse some phrases or words?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Did the message draw people closer to the Lord?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Were there any mannerisms that I should avoid?

