

LIFE Group Ministry Leadership Training

New LIFE Fellowship, Charleston, SC

Session 3

Review:

1. **Consistent Biblical and Historical Pattern**, in both Old and New Testaments for the people of God to gather in Large (**public**) and smaller (**in-home**) settings. It is a consistent pattern both within the biblical record and within early Christian church history. And we find that for over 300 years after Acts 2, Christians continued the same pattern. In fact, some “churches” that did have “public” church-owned buildings, continued meeting in homes well into the 5th Century A.D. (including Ephesus and the surrounding areas of what today is modern Turkey).
2. **Span of Care** (biblical concept) – within the Body of Christ. Based on Exodus 18:13-27, the biblical “one anothers”, Matt. 11:28-30 and Galatians 6:1-5.
3. The “**One Anothers**”: These commands/mandates must have a small enough social-relational **context** in which to thrive effectively and fruitfully (see Acts 2:42-47).

4. **Size Matters**. The **size** of the **in-home small group** matters because of concept of “**Communication Lines**”:

The formula for **group communication lines** is $N \times N - (N) = CL$. “N” stands for the number of persons and “CL” represents **Communication Lines**. The number of persons present, multiplied by the number of persons present, minus the number of persons present, equals the number of communication lines in the group. For example, suppose four persons get together for a meeting. How many lines of communication will be present? Using the formula, we have this: $4 \times 4 - (4) = CL$. 4 times 4 equals 16. 16 minus 4 equals 12. In a group of four there are 12 lines of communication.

Now what about a group of twelve? $12 \times 12 - (12) = 132$. In a group of twelve, for **everyone** to **relate** to the other members in **some kind of personal way, there must be 132 separate incidents of relationship**. Do you see why Jesus **only** had **twelve disciples**. Size of the group does make a difference in **relationship** and **community**.

(from *"The Second Reformation: Reshaping the Church for the 21st Century"* by William A. Beckham, pg. 63)

5. **Exercising of God’s Spiritual Gifts** by God’s people for His Kingdom Purposes for the edifying of the Body of Christ, according to their biblical parameters... seem to best work within social-relational contexts that are small enough for God’s Love to flow between people, in less structured, more relaxed environments (e.g.: in-home small groups) per #4 above.
6. **The Priesthood of the Believer... ALL believers ARE ministers** (1 Peter 2:9). This biblical principle and concept must have a context so that all believers can minister God’s love according to the Spiritual Gifts God has provided them, in some way toward one another, with one another, and toward the lost world, together. In-home small groups provide one of the best environments for this to flourish. A social-relational context where all believers can be involved in ministry is the goal. This principle, combined with #2 through #5 above, seems to all work hand-in-hand together.

7. **Oikos (οἶκος)** (Luke 10:1-9; Acts 10:1-2, 24, 27, 33, 44; 16:31-34)
“Household” – can be relatives (husband, wife, children, aunts, uncles, dad, mom, grandpas/grandmas, cousins, etc...), friends, co-workers, neighbors, etc., but can never be a stranger. These are the “warm” market relationships we may have in life, that God wants us to reach with the gospel... our first contact grouping of people. And typically, in Scripture, they are in the “local area” of a gathering.

 8. **“Man of Peace”** (Luke 10:1-9) – this was a by-product of our first look at “oikos” in Luke 10. We found that Jesus commissioned the 70 (two-by-two) to find a home (or “oikos”) with a person (or family) of peace there in the particular town/city. Then reach out to that city through the home. God has a central theme throughout the Old and New Testament regarding the spread of His Word and Love through the home and outward. The “man of peace” was someone who would be open both to “the messenger” and “the message”.

 9. **Servant Leadership Concepts:**
 - a. **Jethro Principle** (Exodus 18:13-27 and Deut. 1:9-18; also Matt. 11:28-30)
 - b. **Span of Care within leadership levels** (Exod. 18:13-27; Matt. 11:28-30 & Gal. 6:1-5, “one anothers”)
 - c. **Elders and Deacons** are the simple servant-leadership levels in the New Testament
 - d. **Servant-Leadership is the Biblical model** (Matt. 20:25-28; 23:10-12; Luke 22:24-37; John 12:26; 13:1-17)
 - e. **Servant-Leadership** is for shepherding God’s “flock” (John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5)
 - f. **Servant-Leadership** aims at **multiplication** of the “flock” and “servant-leaders” (2 Tim. 2:2)
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III. Small Group Leadership – Who you are, What to do, & How to do:

A. Who You Are:

- 1) You are **not** a Bible Teacher, Bible Professor, Bible Leader, or Bible Expositor
(see James 3:1 & 1 Timothy 3:8-13)

You will be provided biblically-based materials that will help your group gatherings with the Bible discussion time and for other parts of your group gathering times. So don’t worry about coming up with Bible study topics, etc. You just focus on helping and nurturing those in your group.
- 2) You are to facilitate and lead the group (remember → cell group = people)
- 3) You are a person (or couple) who loves God’s flock
- 4) You want to help people grow in their relationship with God by:
 - a. helping them to discover their gifts from God
 - b. helping them learn how to “learn from God”
 - c. discipling and mentoring others within your group
 - d. helping others learn how to disciple and mentor others within the group
 - e. delegating responsibility
 - f. using your own Spiritual Gifts that God has given you in serving others as an example
- 5) You are to lead by example with love and servant-hearted motivations
- 6) You are under the loving and nurturing authority of your coach in Christ Jesus. Your coach is the person you can bounce things off from; seek advice and prayer from. He will help you with many of the things that might come up while you are leading your group (again, lest you forget... → cell group = people). You are not left alone in the wilderness.

B. What are you supposed to do?

- 1) You are to lead your group, during the gathering times and outside of those times... as a loving shepherd, not as a dictator. Facilitate the gathering times... help guide them, etc.
- 2) You are to seek to help those in your group move from where they are currently at, to where they need to be, step by step, in their walk with Jesus Christ (not all at once... but step by step... just be available and let God use you...) [Your coach will help you, personally, in this process]
- 3) You are to find and work with an apprentice (or apprentice couple) to help you lead the group. **Do this as soon as you can.** This is also preparation for future multiplication of the group. The apprentice (or apprentice couple) will lead the new group that forms from the process of multiplication. You can be now help your apprentice(s) in his/their new role.
- 4) You are to disciple and mentor others (including your apprentice(s)) and pass on the baton so that those you have disciplined and mentored will continue to do the same with others.
- 5) You are to help everyone in your group to participate in the various parts of your gathering times so that no one is left out of the worship, Bible discussion, prayer, & fellowship times.
- 6) Help to foster a relational atmosphere of:
 - a. Safety (confidentiality... what is shared in the group, stays in the group)
 - b. Mutual Edification
 - c. Mutual Encouragement
 - d. Mutual Accountability
 - e. Mutual Support
 - f. The exercise of the “One Anothers”... according to each person’s Spiritual giftedness... fostering an environment where people can exercise love and care with and for one another.
- 7) Help your group understand that everyone is a part of the group and has a role and function and all are needed for the mission God has for all of you. Teamwork is one of your goals. Godly, servant-action is the by-product. (see Eph. 4:15-16)
- 8) Help your group understand that they are to grow spiritually and numerically. If they truly are growing spiritually, they will grow numerically (unless there are some health or physical problems, or other related issues going on, of course). This is the ideal and the Biblical Norm. (see Acts 12:24; 19:20 → making, growing, and multiplying “reproducing disciples”; ref. Matt. 28:18-20)
- 9) Help your group understand, that as you are growing numerically, your group will need to go through a process, we call, multiplication, where one group becomes two groups. IT IS NOT a SPLIT or DIVISION, but MULTIPLICATION. It will become more than the sum of its parts. Prepare them for this early on, and the group will get on board with it as part of their mission instructions from Jesus Christ our Lord (see the verses in #8 above).
- 10) Follow-up with visitors (this can be delegated... or you can take your apprentice(s) along, etc... this is a great mentoring opportunity).
- 11) Your group might be assigned to follow-up with certain visitors of our public Worship Celebration ... most likely, just follow the method seen in #10 above.
- 12) Remember to always delegate and empower others of your group in various tasks, even those that might “stretch” them a bit. That is how we all grow in our walk with Jesus.

- 13) You must, weekly, outside of your meeting times, make sure everyone in your group is contacting each other, in some relational way. This means that you must contact others, as well, but you do not have to contact everyone. You can delegate some of this so that everyone can have a hand in this. The main goal is for social-relational touch (God's Love) to be expressed within the relationships of the group in between the small group meeting times. This is something you must make sure is happening. Otherwise, your group is just a group that meets once a week in a home (i.e.: it can become just a "meeting").

C. How do you do this?

- 1) **Prayerfully** (Luke 18:1-8; Matt. 9:35-38; Luke 10:1-2)
- 2) **Humbly** (Isaiah 66:1-2; James 4:6,10; 1 Peter 5:5-6)
- 3) **With a servant's heart** (1 Tim. 3:8-13; Matt. 20:25-28; 23:10-12; Luke 22:24-37; John 12:26; 13:1-17)
- 4) **With Fear and Trembling** (Isaiah 66:1-2; Phil. 2:12-13)
- 5) **Lovingly** (1 Cor. 13; 1 John 4:7-21; all the "One Anothers")
- 6) **With a Shepherd's Heart** (John 21:15-17)
- 7) **In the Power of God's Spirit** (Acts 1:8)
 - a. Filled with His Spirit (Eph. 5:18-21)
 - b. Led by His Spirit (Galatians 5:18)
 - c. Walking in His Spirit (Galatians 5:16,25)
- 8) **Motivation:** For the Glory of Jesus Christ → for God's Glory (John 15:1-8; 17:1-10; Col. 3:12-17)
- 9) **According** to God's Holy, Infallible, Inerrant, Inspired, Eternal, and Everlasting WORD.
- 10) **Missionally** (Matt. 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-48; Acts 1:8)
- 11) **Joyfully** → The Joy of the LORD is my strength (Neh. 8:10)
- 12) With **Accountability** with your coach, fellow small group leaders, with your group, with this church family, and especially with God in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior (Eph. 5:21)
- 13) **With the Best Habits:** (taken from "8 Habits of Effective Small Group Leaders" by Dave Early)
 - a. Dream of Leading a Healthy, Growing, and Multiplying Group
 - b. Pray for Group Members Daily
 - c. Invite New People to Visit the Group Weekly (& helping others in the group to do the same)
 - d. Contact Group Members Regularly (just like **B:13** above states)
 - e. Prepare for the Group Meeting
 - f. Mentor an Apprentice Leader
 - g. Plan Group Fellowship Activities
 - h. Be Committed to Personal Spiritual Growth
- 14) **Step By Step**... with the help of your coach or the coaches/elders... learn as you go. Don't be afraid of not being perfect the first time. Just trust in God and walk in His Power, Strength, Love, and Presence, according to His Word. Ask for help when you need it.
- 15) **NOTE:** This is **NOT** a "Sunday School" model of a Bible Study... what we are attempting is **much different**. It is a relational-based ministry... but this does not mean we are not going to study God's Word. We are going to study it... but in a way that will help us apply what we are learning to our own lives... **with one another**. Learning **together**, growing **together**, and ministering **together**.
- 16) **Evangelistically**... we must always remember... we are building each other up in our most Holy Faith, **so that we can help the LOST** discover New Life in Jesus Christ. **That is our Mission**. So we **cannot end up being a Holy Huddle**... in it just for ourselves. But we must be "in it" for God, for one another, and for the LOST.

Note: The Gathering Times should only last about 1½ hours. Example: starting at 7:00 PM, it should be done by 8:30 PM. If people want to stay after (based on your host family's permission of course), that is O.K., but others may have to leave due to next day's schedule or picking up kids from the baby sitter's. You must keep to the schedule, as best you can, and everyone in the group needs to understand this... be considerate of one another's schedules, etc. (see "other paperwork")

Summary:

Don't be overwhelmed. Let's keep it Simple → "Bottom Line" it:

You must be: Faithful, Available, and Teachable (F.A.T.)

You must be: Usable by God. (U. F.A.T.) (also, health and physicality can be a factor in this)

You must be: Accountable to your coach, your group, this church family, and especially to God.

You must be: A servant-hearted person... who wants nothing less than to glorify God, not yourself and you want to help others to grow in Christ.

You must be: Willing to continue to learn, to grow personally, to contact people, invite people, to delegate.

You must be: Humble and Prayerful, with no hidden agendas. Just wanting to serve.

You must be: On Mission → always remembering the Great Commission of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He must be in control... and His Mission must be your Mission in life.

Assignment for this week: (we will seek to meet in the near future for further discussion and follow-up, etc.)

1. Continue to read through the "Small Groups" concept packet (chew off some more bite-sized chunks as you go). You can read through this for the next few weeks. We *will* bring up some of these concepts and ideas in the upcoming session. If you have questions regarding any of these articles, please bring them up in our next discussion time.
2. If you haven't yet done so already, please, listen to the 2 "Wine Skins" CDs
3. Please re-read through Sessions 1 thru 3 and their respective Scriptural references.
4. Continue reading through "*A Church OF Small Groups: Seeking to Create the Biblical Community Jesus Prayed for*" if you haven't already.
5. Continue praying for those whom God has laid on your heart to be the core of your group. We suggest at least 1 other couple, minimum, that would call New LIFE Fellowship their home church family, to be a part of your core group (2 other couples would be better).
6. Continue praying for those whom God has laid on your heart who live in this area who are unchurched, and especially for those who are non-Christians... that God has placed in your "oikos", whom you **can** invite to your "home group" in the near future. Continue praying that God will open the doors of their hearts, even now, so that they will be a part of your group soon after you begin meeting together. Nothing is impossible for God! **Remember:** we are **On-Mission!!!**
7. **Continue praying for an "apprentice" or "apprentice couple"** that you can **mentor** and/or disciple for the purpose of helping you in leading your group and in helping your group grow and **multiply**. Then they will become prepared to lead their own group, as yours multiplies.