



# Small Group Leadership

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TRAINING WORKBOOK



## Mission and Vision

We believe that man was created by God for Impact and Intimacy.

We come together as a church as a large group for the sake of impact. We can do more to impact our community and our world as a large group. And corporate worship services can be used to impact more people through the unifying preaching of God's Word.

The church is also called to come together in smaller groups for the sake of intimacy. We are called to truly know and love others. This love is fleshed out in the small communities in which we live out the great commandment.

At Grace Baptist Church we believe that making fully devoted followers of Christ (discipleship), is best accomplished in both large and small settings.

***A Small Group is a group of people that meet regularly to provide an intimate opportunity to accomplish the mission of the church.***

Small Groups at Grace are where relational discipleship is carried out in a community context. In small groups, people are encouraged, guided, admonished, gifted, and released for service. Small groups provide an opportunity for support, prayer, spiritual growth, and practical love. Small groups are encouraged to meet regularly in an environment where spiritual growth can take place.

The primary purpose of small groups is growth into Christ-likeness; becoming disciples who are learning to live by the indwelling life of Christ in order to love like Christ and live like Christ.

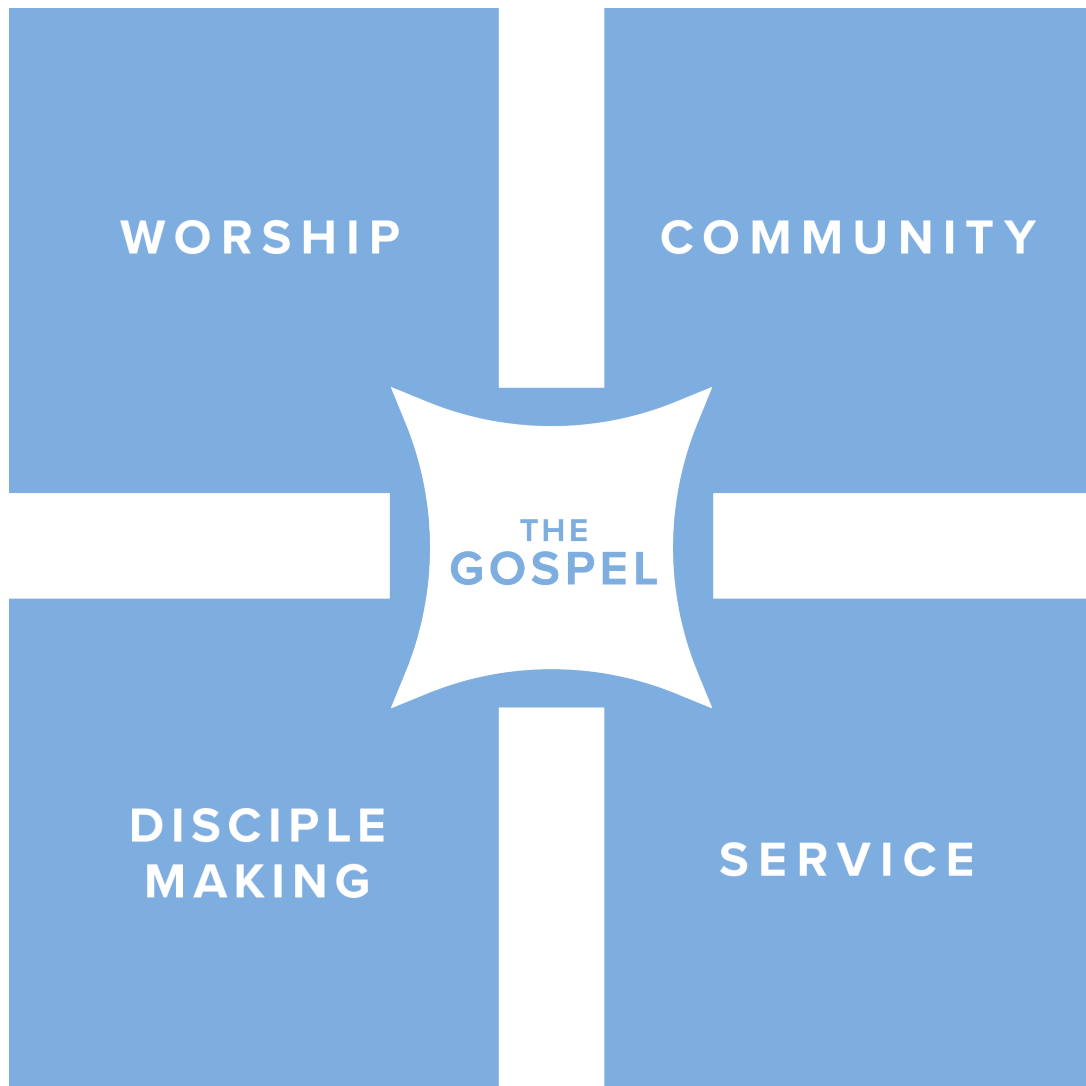
# How Do Small Groups Accomplish Our Mission?

## Our Mission

Grace Baptist Church exists to bring glory to God by making fully devoted followers of Christ who passionately love God and people.

## Our Vision

Grace Baptist Church will be faithful in providing gospel-centered opportunities that engage, evangelize, establish, and equip people to be fully devoted followers of Christ through a life of worship, community, disciple-making, and service in our families, our church, and our world.



# Our Values

We believe that the life of a fully devoted follower of Christ is a life of worship, community, disciple-making, and service. Most importantly, these four things are fueled by the gospel and our new identity in Jesus.

## WORSHIP

Small groups are a place of worship. It is in the relationships of small group that we learn to make much of God and his glory in every area of our lives.

## COMMUNITY

Though each Christian has a personal relationship with God, that relationship is not private. God does not intend for Christians to do life alone. We were made for relationship with God and with each other. Small groups are a place of true gospel community for connection and growth. It is in small groups that we practice the one anothering that Christ both commands and empowers. It is where we are known and know others. A fully devoted follower of Christ shares their life with other believers.

## SERVICE

Small groups are a place of service. It is in small group relationships that we learn to esteem others as better than ourselves, care for others, work together, and meet the tangible needs of others.

## DISCIPLE MAKING

We are called to share our faith with others. As we continue to grow in our understanding of the gospel and allow it to saturate our hearts and our minds, it will more naturally flow out of us as we share our lives with other people.

In The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), Jesus sent out the disciples to multiply disciples. As we are being transformed into the image of Christ and learning to live a life of love for God and others, we are called to equip others to do the same. The mark of a mature Christ follower is that they have learned to multiply themselves. **They have become a disciple-making disciple.**

Small groups are a place where relational discipleship happens. Our personal faith is strengthened as we are used to strengthen the faith of others. This is called ***mutual disciple making***. Each person in the group is making a disciple while also being disciplined. Small groups should be a place where everyone is encouraged to speak into the lives of the other group members and share what God has been doing to transform our lives, not just individually, but as a group and through the group.

**DISCUSS:** *1. In what ways is your small group a place of worship, service, community, and disciple-making?*

*2. How would you explain mutual disciple-making to your group members?*

# Our Strategy

At Grace we ultimately want to see people equipped to make disciples (disciples making disciples), and to live a life that trusts in Christ's indwelling love through the gospel. We want to see them living as Christ among their family, the church, and in the world.

We believe this happens as we see people move to the right from engaged to equipped.

## ENGAGED

Small groups are a place of engagement. Those exploring Christianity or who are new to Christianity are welcome in our small groups. Small group members are encouraged to invite others to their group to witness Christian community in action.

## EVANGELIZED

Small groups are a place of evangelism. Although, a small group is probably not the place where most people will first hear the gospel, we should never just assume that everyone in our group is already saved. Because we are gospel centered we should be constantly declaring the gospel both to the saved and the unsaved.

## ESTABLISHED

Small groups are a place of establishment. It is in a small group that a person finds their place in the church and in true community. Small groups ground people in their faith as they work to apply the gospel to every area of their lives. Small groups should also challenge each other toward establishment in the overall church life through church attendance, membership, and ministry.

## EQUIPPED

Small groups are a place of equipping. Every small group member should find that their group is equipping them for life in their family, their church, and the world. Applying the gospel to these three areas, while seeking Christ likeness, provides the equipping needed for us as believers to move through life with the love and holiness of our Savior.



## The 4 E's and the People In Your Small Group

List the people involved in your small group and mark where they are in the process of “moving to the right.”

Name	Engaged; not a Christian; gospel not shared	Evangelized; not a Christian, gospel has been clearly presented.	Established (new); has recently become a Christian, needs to be disciplined.	Established (struggling); has been a Christian but shows no signs of spiritual growth.	Established (growing); has been a Christian and is growing in their faith.	Equipped; is established and growing and is discipling/equipping others.

*Identify those who are not moving. What are the obstacles?*

*How can you help move people to the right?*

# Core Values of Small Groups?

## Small Groups are Gospel-Centered

As we said earlier, the primary purpose of small groups is growth into Christlikeness. We want to become disciples who are learning to live by the indwelling life of Christ in order to love like Christ and live like Christ. Only the gospel can make this happen.

The gospel is what brings us into eternal life, but it is also what gives our life meaning and purpose now. It answers our every question and guides our every step. Small groups should always point a person back to the gospel and trust in our Savior, not trust in our own efforts.

*On a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest) how gospel-centered is your group?*

## Small Groups are Relational

Disciples are made within authentic relationships. God exists as a Trinity; He is the most relational being in the universe. Because we image Him, we too are made for relationships.

Small groups should seek to create environments of caring, and safety, where people can be open and honest about their struggles and find grace. Small groups are not just a Bible study but are intended to be a place to find accountability and spiritual friendship.

*On a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest) how relational is your group?*

## Small Groups are Biblical

The Word of God should be at the center of every small group. Small group should provide an opportunity to read, meditate, memorize, and pray the scripture together.

Groups are encouraged to use the sermon questions from the previous Sunday to guide their group through biblical study and application. Other Bible studies can be used with approval from the pastors. Leaders can find pre-approved resources in the Discipleship Resource Room at main campus. Spiritual growth occurs as the Word of God is used by the Spirit of God to grow us into Christ's image.

*On a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest) how biblical is your group?*



## Small Groups are Purposeful

Small groups should be purposeful in equipping men and women to become disciples who make disciples. Small group leaders are encouraged to be seeking to develop new leaders from within their group that might be sent out to start a new group. Not because we want more small groups, but because we want small groups to grow and multiply so that more and more people can be equipped to be disciple makers. This is purposeful growth, not growth for growth's sake.

*On a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest) how purposeful is your group?*

## Small Groups are Missional

Small Groups at Grace should be open to new members. Open groups allow more people to get involved and thus more people are purposefully discipled. Small Groups are also encouraged to find ways to serve together in the community. This builds unity within the group, and also allows the group to become outward focused.

*On a scale of 1 (lowest) - 5 (highest) how missional is your group?*

## Theology for Small Groups

God isn't just saving individuals, he is creating a community. The idea that God is saving a people for himself runs throughout the entire Bible. "I will be their God and they will be my people." (Jeremiah 30:22) The church must take the call to community seriously.

### God is a Community

As a Trinity, God is a community in himself. Community is not just a creation of God, it is the nature of God. Understanding is also essential for understanding that God is love. Because God is a Trinity, there can be communal love in the universe.

We are made in God's image. This means that we are made for loving community. When we live outside of community and interdependence on one another, we live outside of our very humanity.

### God Calls Us Into Community

When God made mankind, he made us to need each other. He proclaimed that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Genesis 2:18). The invisible God chose not to meet every need of his human creation. "He made Mankind to need more than himself" (Allender and Longman, *Intimate Allies*). Our greatest and deepest needs are met by God, but God also intends for us as humans to meet needs for one another as God's representatives. The scriptures offer numerous examples of God's desire to create for himself a community:

- God called and covenanted with Israel as a nation. Exodus 19
- God dealt with Israel's sin corporately. Joshua 4.
- God created the church as a corporate outpouring of his life. Acts 2.
- We are called and expected to live as family. Mark 10.
- Community always takes priority over individuality. Romans 12.
- We are one body, each belonging to the other members. 1 Corinthians 12.
- We are God's house, or dwelling place, corporately. 1 Corinthians 3:9.
- Most of the New Testament epistles are addressed not to individuals but to churches.

This does not negate the importance of your individuality. But it does make your life about much more than your individuality.

# The Purpose of Community

## **God desires to be in community with humanity.**

He created us to enjoy living with him and with one another. The purpose of the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ is to bring God into community with his people.

*Hebrews 2:10-13*

*For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."*

## **The Christian community also exists to bring holiness to God's people.**

We encourage each other to live lives that are pleasing to God. We remind each other of the grace of God and offer that grace in ways that bring strength for godliness. We build one another up in truth and love and remind one another of the gospel.

*Hebrews 3:12-13. 12*

*Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

*Hebrews 10: 24-25*

*And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

## **The Christian community is meant to be a "city on a hill."**

The church (and the small group) exists to make God known to the world. By our love and holiness, we are to live lives that are unique and counter-cultural, while being a winsome witness of the good news of Jesus. Our hope should be appealing and our lifestyle beneficial to the world.

*Hebrews 12:14*

*Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

*Hebrews 13:13*

*Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.*

# Implications for Small Groups

## Relationship

The kind of community that God has called us to requires intimate face to face relationships. This kind of community will take effort. Gathering in the large corporate worship service alone will not allow for us to fulfill the level of community that God requires of us. We will not fulfill the one another statements of Christ nor will we live out the gospel in its fullness. This can only be done as we do life together in ongoing relationships with others.

**DISCUSS:** *Where are you seeing relational intimacy forming in your group?*

## Ministry

Every Christian must understand that they are a minister within God's community. A church cannot expect the pastoral staff alone to "build up the believers." It is not the responsibility of the pastoral staff alone to win people to Christ. The scripture says that each member grows the body as they speak the truth in love to one another.

*Ephesians 4:15-16.*

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.*

The Bible calls for "every member ministry" or "mutual ministry." Small groups allow for this kind of ministry to take place. Each can serve and share as God has gifted them.

*Romans 12:5.*

*so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*

*1 Corinthians 14:26*

*What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.*

Often we become consumeristic concerning church. We ask "what do I get out of this?" But based on what we have learned about God and community, we should first ask, "What can I give to this group?" Our concern should be that we are building others up and speaking the truth in love. When this is done, not only will we give Bible knowledge, but we will see lives changed.

**DISCUSS:** *Is mutual ministry happening in your group? In what ways?*

# Community

We must endeavor to build up our desire for and participation in community. Our culture today encourages radical individualism. We tend to do community with those that look, act, and think like we do. Therefore our ability to participate in true community has been diminished. Also the busyness of our lives provides a great excuse for avoiding community. But this is what we are created for and what God expects of us.

In regards to community Pastor Tim Keller says, “Anything worth doing is worth doing poorly.” What he means is that community will be hard and we will do it poorly quite often. But this is better than not doing it at all. We must recommit to living as God’s people, as his new society of salt and light in a dark and dying world.

**DISCUSS:** *What hinderances to community are you and your group battling?*

## LESSON 3

# Leading a Healthy Small Group

## The Agenda

The primary goal of a small group at Grace is to develop a Christian community where Jesus is experienced in his person and power.

Through mutual ministry, small group communities should be a place where people are cared for and encouraged to live lives of faith in the gospel. The small group should be lead in such a way as to allow transformation by Christ that leads to impact by group members in the places where they do life.

**DISCUSS:** Is your small group experiencing Christ as you meet? In what ways?

## Opening

- Greet and welcome group members.
- Remind group members of the purpose of the group - to experience Christ and to grow in his grace together.
- Pray for the group session.
- Introduce any new members.

## Bible Study

- Take a serious look into the scriptures. Life transformation does not take place apart from God's Word. It is recommended that small groups use the sermon questions as a guide. Any other Bible study materials should be approved by Pastor Brady before you begin.
- Small group Bible study should aim at understanding the general meaning and applications of a text. Digging into too much detail in a text tends to lead to talking from ignorance more than from knowledge. Always try to steer the conversation back to the gospel.
- Although Bible Study should be the central focus of your small group time, it should not be all that you do. Leave time to practice the "One Anothers" of scripture.
- An experienced leader may be able to weave sharing and prayer into the Bible study time. If the application questions are personal and pointed, they may offer a chance to minister to one another during this time. Prayer can then flow from the reading of scripture. This of course takes time and practice.

## Sharing

- As Christians we share our lives in Christ (koinonia). We belong to each other. Small group is the place where we are able to share our growth in Christ together.
- Let group members talk about how God is at work in their lives.
- Ask if you can lovingly hold each other accountable for what you see the scripture requiring of us in Christ.
- Ask. "What work of grace do you think Christ wants to do in your life?"
- Allow time to share specific needs in each other's lives.
- Do not be afraid of silence as you share. Allow God room to work. If no one shares after a few minutes then simply move on to the next part.
- Avoid these two extremes: 1) Sharing feelings without understanding God's perspective. 2) Sharing truth without applying it to our personal lives.

## Prayer

- Talk about prayer with your group: Prayer is the chief way that we help one another; it is participation in God's will; God uses our prayers to change our hearts and to change the world.
- Focus on Scripture Centered Prayers. Resist the temptation to just pray about our temporal needs or those distantly related to us. Pray the Scripture you studied back to God.
- Use your prayer time to commit to being used by God this week. Ask God to use you for his glory and gospel advance.
- It is of course fine to share personal prayer requests. Be careful not to let this time drag on and on.
- Recommend the ACTS model for prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication.

## Mission

- Remind your group that small group is not just a place for us to vent or have our needs met. Continue to talk about an outward focus. Without imitating Christ in mission, your group will become stagnate and lifeless.
- Let the group members themselves be the starting point for outward mission. Are the needs of the group members being met? Let group members experience the joy of serving each other.
- Think about taking on a project as a group: serve at a mission; nursing home; church outreach; etc.
- Invite newcomers to the church to join your group.

**DISCUSS:** *What are 2-3 takeaways from this section that you can implement immediately in your group?*

# The Atmosphere

## Environment

Avoid anything that will hinder group members from experiencing Christ through mutual ministry. The environment should be warm, relaxed, and safe.

## Size of the Group

The size of a small group dramatically affects the ability to lead and the group's ability to unite. As groups grow larger they will naturally focus on the talkative few. Participation will decrease and members will feel less cared for. Remember, two smaller groups are often more vital than one larger one.

\*At Grace we do not hold to specific rules for group size, but it is recommended that a group be at least 3 members and at 8 a group leader can begin to think through multiplication.

## The Room

- Groups should sit so that everyone can see each other. Be accessible to your whole group. Sit in a central spot.
- Keep the room well lit so people can read their Bibles and see each other.
- Refreshments? It's up to you. But remember this doesn't have to be elaborate. Keeping it simple for yourself and group members is recommended. Try hosting a group dinner once in awhile. Meals turn strangers into friends.
- Be careful of background music/noise that may be a distraction.

**DISCUSS:** *What are 1-2 takeaways from this section that you can implement immediately in your group?*



# Your Verbal Interaction Skills

## **Enthusiasm**

Your enthusiasm for the topic sets the tone.

## **Honesty**

Your honest, vulnerable, and authentic sharing will be contagious.

## **Affirmation**

Never ridicule or make light of what others are sharing. Affirm their honesty.

## **Freedom**

Allow people the freedom to share or not share (especially in the early stages). Never embarrass anyone by making them answer a question they might not know the answer to.

## **Equal Access**

Try to keep individuals from dominating the discussion. "How about someone else this time."

## **Silence**

Don't be afraid of silence. Use silence to allow people time to think. But also diagnose the silence - is the question too difficult; poorly worded; too obvious; too risky to answer?

## **Summarize**

"How can we summarize this section?" "What conclusions can we come to?" "What new insights did we gain?" "What were you reminded of that you had forgotten?" "Do you feel that you have experienced Christ?" These types of questions will help group members to internalize what they have learned, and they will help you to assess if the group is growing.

**DISCUSS:** *What questions/problems do you need help with that were brought up in this section?*

## A Structure for Caring & Growth

A healthy church is defined primarily by its relationships. In smaller churches genuine relationships may be more easily formed without much structure needed. In a larger church, people more easily fall through the cracks. Small Groups serve to ensure that people are cared for and that they are growing in their relationship with Christ.

Small Groups at Grace should be seen as the front line of pastoral care. Small group leaders care for group members, while being cared for by Pastors and Deacons. In this way, each group member is encouraged to grow in maturity and unity.

## Shepherding a Small Group

To lead a small group is to shepherd people's hearts toward God. The primary objective of a group leader is to get your group members to relate to God (not just to the group or to yourself). As a shepherd, you should pursue God in developing a passion for Him and a compassion for others.

**DISCUSS:** *How is your group doing at relating to one another as compared to relating to God?*

## Get People to Deal With God

Real change takes place only when we experience the presence of God through communion with Him through scripture, meditation, prayer, community, suffering, and learning to trust the gospel through the indwelling life of Christ.

Resist the temptation to "have all the answers." Instead, guide group members to the presence of God. If your group members have not taken their lives to God, they will only experience superficial change. Teaching your group to pray and praying for them are how we learn to be attentive to God.

For example: if your group time is continuously a "venting" session, you may need to talk to them about taking their sins and suffering to God in faith, before bringing it to your group meetings. Have they already thought through how the gospel applies to their circumstance before they come to the group? If not, why not?

**DISCUSS:** *Have you seen group members taking/living their lives before God? What changes have you seen? (Don't share details)*

## Facilitate Discussion, Don't Lecture

Lead people to discover the truths of scripture for themselves. Be careful not to spoon feed answers. Ask good follow up questions. Also don't get bogged down into the details of a passage "missing the forest for the trees."

## Balance Individual Care and Group Care

Providing care in a group is much different than caring for an individual. You will need to pay attention to the group as a unit. You will need to weigh the needs of an individual against the needs of the entire group. Your group as a whole will grow through different stages: instability, relationship building, conflict, maturity, etc. Since groups are designed to multiply, this can give your group the vision it needs to see it through these various stages.

At the same time you are cultivating a deep love for each individual in your group, and a desire to see each of them grow closer to Christ and each other. Group members must learn to trust one another, and this will come as you demonstrate trust for those in your group. The questions you ask, and the tone in which you answer questions will contribute to the level of trust that the group develops.

Ask specific, penetrating, and personal questions that cause group members to compare their lives to God's word. Answer questions with compassion, patience, and encouragement. Never act shocked by what someone shares (remember your sins and struggles are just as sinful). And never gossip about any group issues outside of your group.

**DISCUSS:** *In what ways have you been able to balance individual and group care?*

## LESSON 5

# Stages in Small Group Life

## The Life Cycle of a Small Group

A growing healthy small group will go through various stages of development. These stages are not clearly marked and you may not even notice them. However understanding these stages may help you to address and adjust to different issues in your group.

\*Note that these stages are descriptive not prescriptive. As the leader you should not be trying to make your group move from one stage to the next.

Stage	The Group	The Leader
<b>1. Bonding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excitement and exploration</li><li>• Anxiety—"Do I belong here?" "Can I trust this group/ leader?" "Will my ideas be valued?"</li><li>• People need to feel relaxed, welcomed, safe.</li><li>• People need to get the idea that they can be honest here.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make the purpose of the group clearly known. This will shape the expectations of the group members.</li><li>• Good preparation is key.</li><li>• Set the pattern for sharing honestly.</li><li>• Don't force closeness but also move slowly toward it.</li><li>• Start by having people share past events and experiences (rather than present). This allows people to open up without being too revealing.</li><li>• Remember that any time you get a new member they will be in this stage.</li></ul>
<b>2. Growing Deeper</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The "honeymoon" is over. Different personalities may bring conflict.</li><li>• People are deciding if they will commit to the group for the long term.</li><li>• There may be inconsistency or dropouts.</li><li>• The overly critical, talkative, needy group members are emerging at this time.</li><li>• People are deciding how much they can trust one another—"How honest can I be?"</li><li>• Bible study and application are becoming richer.</li><li>• An interdependent community is developing. Group members are finding help while helping others.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You will have to help the overly critical, talkative, or needy to become constructive members of the group.</li><li>• People will gauge how honest they can be by how honest the leader is.</li><li>• People need to know that they can disagree with you.</li><li>• The group must become our group not just the leader's group.</li><li>• If group member leave or drop out of the group don't become defensive. Follow up with them and help them find a new group.</li></ul>

<p><b>3. Mutual Ministry</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People are committed to the group.</li> <li>• Members are looking past their own needs to the needs of others.</li> <li>• Sharing is more genuine.</li> <li>• One Anothering is taking place.</li> <li>• There is regular praying and caring for each other.</li> <li>• Deeper problems and disagreements may emerge.</li> <li>• One person's problems may begin to dominate the group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You may experience emotional ups and downs as the group goes from amazing one week to ordinary or even disappointing the next.</li> <li>• Take the time to make minor adjustments to your group at this stage.</li> <li>• Reach out to a pastor or the discipleship team with any long term issues.</li> <li>• Think about an apprentice leader that you can be training.</li> <li>• If the group is going well be careful not to rest in that success.</li> <li>• Add special times and elements to the group—serving together, an outing, etc. Break the routine.</li> <li>• Guide the group in looking outside of yourselves—service, outreach, inviting new members.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Multiplication</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The apprentice is ready to lead a group.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As the group is growing begin to prepare them for multiplication.</li> <li>• Choose a few members to launch out with the apprentice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Ending a Group</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some groups may come to an end without multiplying—members move away, loss of interest, inability to speak the truth in love to one another.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not consider this a failure. God has used your group and will continue to use the experience in everyone's life. Undoubtedly many good things happened in the member's lives and growth occurred.</li> <li>• Take time to celebrate the group and affirm one another.</li> <li>• Encourage everyone to try a new group.</li> </ul>

**DISCUSS:** *What stage is your group in?  
What questions/problems do you need addressed?*

# Suggestions for Developing Group Loyalty

## Sincerity

Cultivate in yourself a sincere, authentic concern for each person who attends the group. Develop God's perspective on each individual. In Acts 20:28 Paul says, "Be shepherds of the church of God which he bought with his own blood." If Jesus loved each person in your group enough to die for them, we can certainly seek to love them enough to give the energy to really listen when they speak, pray for them, perhaps call them from time to time, and think about how we might advance God's purpose in their lives. We ought to say about each person, "Christ's care has been demonstrated by individually choosing and setting his love upon this person. Therefore, they are worthy of my full attention and authentic concern when I am speaking to them." People can tell whether you really love them or if you are just faking it.

## Encouragement

Be vocal about telling people about how important and valuable they are to the group. (Here again be honest. Don't overdo it.) Consider meeting individually with people in your group for lunch.

## Follow-Up

Call first time visitors within 48 hours after their first visit to tell them you were glad they were there. Ask them if they have questions about the group or if there is anything you can do for them. Maybe have lunch with them.

## Punctuality

Respect people's schedules. Begin and END on time. It is better to be too short and have people wishing the group would last longer than to have the group last too long so that people are discreetly looking at their watches wondering when things are finally going to end.

## Importance

Continue to ask yourself, "Do people consider the time they put into the group a worthwhile investment? What changes if any can I make so they find it more worthwhile? Is there anything we are doing that should be deleted or shortened? Is there anything that should be added?" Attendance problems never arise when a group is worth coming to.

## Friendship

Get people together for activities outside the normal group time.

## Mutual Support

Set up a system whereby people in the group communicate with another person in the group between meetings. Give a good amount of freedom with regards to what form this communication should take (have a meal, call and ask how things are going and if there is anything to pray for, praying together.)

## Develop Leaders

Share leadership in the group. Get people using their gifts for the benefits of others.

## Group Covenant

Consider writing a group covenant in which the level of commitment that you expect from one another is spelled out.

