

How to Build Thriving Small Groups

Course

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1 Intro: The Motivation for Small Groups

Concept

Small groups are one of the two primary aspects of the Church that allows every member to be activated in ministry.

Intro

Why do small groups? It's about relationship, fulfillment, service and destiny.

Michael's History

I was saved in a church planting ministry in 1974. We believed in small groups and began to practice them from the very start, although we didn't necessarily understand a healthy philosophy about them. Throughout that whole time period, we planted many small groups. Some of them were successful and some were not.

A short time later, I met John Wimber. We became part of the Vineyard movement and planted a vineyard church in the city of San Francisco. We started with small groups. This was John Wimber's philosophy of planting churches. We then multiplied our groups. We actually didn't start doing Sunday morning services until we had five groups with a total of around 80 people. That was an amazing experience for us because it did several things at once. One, it gave us the ability to have fun together without the pressures of church. And, to raise up leaders in an amazing process without the performance of church. Two, it embedded a value and culture of small group relationship that carried on throughout the whole history of our church.

By the peak of our church, we had about 70 small groups. We had some groups that experience attrition, therefore, we had actually planted about 100 groups by that time. We were at about a 65% self-reproduction rate; our groups were multiplying into the next group and multiplying into the next group, etc. Although, some of our groups were multiplied as a result of independent training.

The Biblical Pattern

If you look at Scripture, it is very interesting that the early Church had two primary forms of meeting.

1. They met publically.
2. They met from house to house.

You see this in the early chapters of the Book of Acts. You also see this reiterated by Paul the Apostle with the Ephesians elders in Acts 20:20:

"...I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you *publicly* and from *house to house*."

This is the reason some people even call the vision for small groups a 20/20 vision. The ability to meet in small groups and to meet in a large public setting serve two separate, essential purposes for the local Church. Ralph Neighbour, leader of TOUCH USA, says that small groups combined with public celebrations are the two wings of the Church. A bird cannot fly with only one wing.

There has been a gradual frustration with, and a diminishing value of small groups in our day and age. Something has been seriously lost in the process that is producing a series of weaknesses and problems in local churches. We want to solve these problems but they cannot be solved without some kind of small group ministry in the local Church.

Vision and Motivation: Every Member Ministry

God's vision for the Church is not to build buildings on street corners and have congregations gathering for an hour or hour and a half on a Sunday morning. That is not the Church. In fact, that is not the Church that Jesus built. It is not the Church the apostles built. In fact, Jesus said,

"...If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me"

We are living stones being built together into a dwelling place of the Spirit. (Eph. 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5) We are a body and each one of us represents a different part of the body. (1 Cor. 12:20) All of us are different.

The purposes of Christ will not be fulfilled until every member is mobilized according to their God-given design and destiny. Every member must be mobilized in order for Christ to be most glorified on the earth. Church exists as a community of called-out ones to help mobilize every member to serve the living God on the basis of their unique design and calling in Christ.

If the purpose of God for the Church is to mobilize and equip every member for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ (Eph. 4:11-12) then we have to take a good look at our current structures and ask, "How are we doing?" It is like the old business questions, "What business are you in? And, how's business?"

If I was asked the question, "what business are you in?", the answer would be, "We are in the business of making disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples." If I was asked "How is business?", and all I have is a Sunday morning service, I am going to be hard-pressed to give a positive answer. This is why. Sunday services were never designed to actually produce personal discipleship. They are part of a larger organizational celebration. This is when the key leader speaks and gives the vision for where God is leading the group. This is when the key leader teaches the group the essential principles that will guide them on the journey towards organizational fruitfulness. It is the place where the best worship leaders are leading the best praise and times of intimacy with God. It is the place where the best ministry teams are ministering. It is the place where large group is experienced. But, in the process of large group experience, there are only a few key people who are actually doing the ministry. That can be a problem. If only 15 people are doing ministry on a Sunday morning, that means that the other 100 people in the Church are not being activated. If this is their only experience of fellowship in a given week then they are not moving forward in their discipleship. This is why the early Church practiced the two wings of the Church, according to Acts 20:20; publically and from house to house.

If our goal is for every member to be mobilized and activated according to their divine gifting and calling then we need a context in which every member can function, speak, can have a role and be a player; not just a spectator.

There is a need for large group meetings, or the public side. But, you also need small group meetings as well. Start to develop both because your true fulfillment as a pastor comes when every member is functioning fully in Christ.

The Church Has Many Priorities

The Church has the primary purpose of mobilizing members, yet also has many priorities. We have the priorities of outreach, enfolding, community, presence, training and leadership. Large gatherings are good for what they do, but it is the small gatherings in which every member starts to touch that purpose and those priorities. This is the context in which every member starts to experience ministry at a very basic level; both receiving that ministry and giving it out to others. We need to see small groups as essential to activate every member for the ministry that they are designed to fulfill. Every, single, small group is to be a destiny and a leadership incubator.

Small Groups and Schools of Ministry

Some pastors might have started a school of ministry instead of having small groups. That seems like a very popular thing to do right now. The problem is that they do the schools of ministry just like they are doing the Sunday morning services. So, all the members still do not have an opportunity to speak, serve, minister, etc. When you do a school of ministry in that way, there is no vehicle for personal, individual development.

We are moving away from the idea that small groups are just a way to meet people's needs to a place where we develop people. Pastors are, generally, good delegators but not very consistent people-developers. We want to build people. We want to raise people up. That is the heart of the great commission – to make disciples, who make disciples, who make disciples so that the knowledge of the glory of God would fill the earth like the waters cover the sea.

2 Intro: Biblical Basis for Small Groups

Concept

Throughout the entire scripture there has been a strategy for creating smaller units in order to help move people forward.

Intro

Are small groups necessary? Let's see what the Bible has to say.

Getting Back to the Plan

As the Church has evolved over the last 2000 years since Christ, we have drifted into a structure and format that does not emphasize ever member participation or having small family units where sons and daughters can be raised up. But, it emphasizes the ministry of the most developed ones; the greatest preachers, worship leaders, keyboardists, announcement-givers, video producers, etc. These are the people who get the most recognition in the Church. Unfortunately, the average member is relegated to the role of being a spectator. There is a place for that, as long as we do not neglect the opportunity for average members to minister as well in a powerful way. That is what small groups do. They actually complete the cycle of the Church. Again, I believe in having the key leaders speak to the congregation. There needs to be a context for that. But, there also must be a context for every, single member to speak, pray, minister, worship, and to be community to one another. This is so crucial. And, we see this throughout the scriptures.

The Biblical Model: Family

Throughout the entire scripture there has been a strategy for creating smaller units in order to help move people forward. The initial strategy was family.

When God created Adam and Eve, He created family. When He looked at everything He created, He said, "It is good." He then looked at Adam and said, "No. That is not good." Therefore, He caused a deep sleep to fall upon him. He took from Adam's own body and formed Eve. From the one he made two. Now, when the two come back together there is reproduction, not just of children, but of family. As those children grow and develop there is reproduction of family.

This is part of God's methodology for extending His kingdom and helping people to fulfill heaven's prime directive: to be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. God created family as the primary, delivery system of humanity to fill the earth and subdue it.

We see family in the life of Abraham, our father of faith. Abraham developed a lineage of Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve tribes, forming a nation through his children. God's redemptive goal was not only that the Jewish people would be birthed as a nation but that God Himself would manifest Himself in Jesus the Messiah.

When Christ came on the earth, He healed the sick, cast out demons, taught the truth and did amazing miracles. But, His greatest miracle was to offer His own life in atonement for humanities sins. And, in so doing, He was able to break the power and penalty of sin for every person. In His resurrection, He was able to pour out His gifts upon people. This one man, Jesus, who said beforehand, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

(John 16:7), this one man ascended into heaven, gave gifts unto men and empowered every person to carry a piece of who He is.

In that picture, we see Jesus reproducing family. It is not biological family but spiritual family. He said, "...All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples..." (Matt. 28:18-19) In other words, give birth to spiritual sons and daughters and raise them up to become spiritual mothers and fathers of the next generation. Then, keep that process going. That will keep the spread of the Kingdom of God throughout the earth as it was originally intended in Adam and Eve but was disrupted by sin. What we have here is God using the family unit as the primary, delivery system of human development.

Biblical Examples

We see this in the delegation process that was advised by Jethro to Moses. Moses had leaders over groups of ten, fifties, hundreds, and thousands. There was a concentric, delegation dynamic that Jethro had advised. Although, it might have been over-structural, it still served the needed purpose.

We see this same process in Jesus' ministry. He had the three; Peter, James and John. He also had the nine, the twelve, and the seventy disciples. He had different layers of leadership. He was creating opportunities for people to interact more around their personal callings so that they could do their ministries at different developmental levels. This was Jesus' strategy.

We see this process repeated in the book of Second Timothy as well. 2 Timothy 2:2 says,

"And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." We see this intergenerational team-ship that the Apostle Paul defined for Timothy. This has become a timeless template for how we develop leaders in our churches and how we fulfill the great commission in our lifetime.

One Another Ministry: Every Member Ministry

We meet in a large and small group context because both have unique opportunities and provide unique elements that cannot be provided solely by the other. Remember, it is a huge mistake to do small groups but run them just like a Sunday morning service. The unique opportunity of a small group is that it does not involve just one preacher sharing a 45-minute message. It involves every member sharing, opening up, expressing their needs, ministering to one another, caring for one another and loving one another in a dynamic way. This is what we are aiming for in small group development. One another ministry is the goal so that, not only that every member will minister to one another, but that Christ may be seen and glorified; that all men may know that you are disciples by the love you have one for another! (John 13:35) Do a word search on the phrase, "one another". Every time you see this phrase, there is this amazing, interactive dynamic that is being advised by scripture. This dynamic liberates and releases every member into a high-level ministry function.

Jesus will not be fully seen or glorified until every member is functioning at the fullness of their calling and gifting in Christ. This is what small groups do better than any other structure in the body of Christ.

Destiny Incubator

How do you build small groups that can incubate people? Small groups are not there to simply connect people together. This is a mistake that many pastors make. Pastors will receive many complaints that people are not connecting in their church. Therefore, they will do small group

ministries because they see it as being all about connection. Although I believe in connection, the truth is that people connect better around a mission than they do around merely connecting. And, so it is important to remember that mission contextualizes community better than community contextualizes mission. To build community groups that are only focused around fellowship is not the highest good. It's much better to have a mission. Your mission could be to help people with mental illness, or to serve single mothers, or to stop sex trafficking. And, those are all good missions! But, the highest and most essential mission of every small group should be the maximized development of each member into the gifting and calling that God has given them. If you can create a group that does that then every other secondary mission that the group focuses on will also be of incredible, added benefit.

Make sure that whatever you do, you are trying to do it in small group; your ministries, worship, greeting ministry, administrations ministry, outreach ministry, etc. Make sure there is connection, relationship and every member participation.

Small Groups vs. Schools of Ministry

Many churches are being attracted to having schools of ministry in our generation. They think that they are raising up leaders, but, unfortunately, they are just doing lectures again with no actual development. If you are intent upon doing a school of ministry make sure you integrate small group into that. This will allow every member to do what you are teaching them to do. We have had enough teaching and we have too little doing. Let's make sure that we are activating every member for the ministry that God has called them to. If you are committed to a school of ministry, then break it up somehow so that members are really interacting with each other and serving according to their design and destiny. This is how you create that destiny dynamic.

Maybe you have had disappointments in the past. Maybe you have started a program in the past. We want to help walk you through this developmental process. We want to see every member of your church fully active, fully released, fully mobilized according to their gifts and calling so that, not only will your church be thriving, but your region will be impacted for the glory God.

3 Intro: A Practical Approach

Concept

Small Groups start from the foundational culture and leadership core of the Church and reproduce outward.

Intro

In this section we want to talk about the “how-to” of small groups. How do you build small groups practically? Where do you start?

Clarify Your Culture

The first step in developing small groups is clarifying your vision, values, priorities and practices.

Vision

Your vision will determine where your church goes. What do you see in the future? What is on the horizon of your church? How do you get there? When you look across the audience of your church and see the individuals there what do you envision? Do you envision a continued process of spectators coming and being, in a sense, Christian consumers of your ministry product on a Sunday morning? Or, do you envision the activation of every member? Do you envision each person rising up in the fullness of their calling in Christ and impacting, not only the church through their volunteer service but also, the different spheres of society according to God’s gifting? If that’s more along your line of vision, then you need to ask yourself, “How are we ever going to get there?” We need to have a vehicle that will drive us to that particular destination. That’s why we recommend small groups.

Mission

What must you do to get what you see?

Values

What kinds of values are you fostering as a pastor? What kinds of things do you care about? Do you want your people to be connecting with one another? If so, how? Do you want them to be able to express vulnerability or needs? These are key values. Is intimacy a value in your church? Is intentionality a value? Is interdependency a value? These are all basic core values. If you can make sure that they’re in you, your wife or husband, and children (as a key leader and family) and in your core group, then those values will also permeate your church. What are your values? Are your values consistent with small groups and every member mobilization?

Priorities

What do you spend your resources on? How do you allocate your time, energy, money and talent? What are you giving yourself to as a church?

I can tell more about your values from your calendar and budget than I ever could about what you say you believe your values are. A lot of times we confuse actual values and aspired values. For example, we think we have a value for intimacy but we never allow any time for it. We never allow time for intimacy in our Sunday meetings or in our post-Sunday meetings. Or, we never have small groups that facilitate that kind of intimacy and connection. There can be inconsistency or a discrepancy between our stated values and our actual values.

How do you allocate your time, energy and money? Our values should determine our priorities. Once our priorities are in place then we can allocate our time and discipline ourselves. In order to start a small group ministry, you have to move it up in terms of priority basis. You have to be convinced that this is worth a night a week for your church. And, then encourage every member to go to a small group, although, perhaps, every member will not be involved. But, if you can get 60% or 70% of your membership in small groups, you are off to a great start. But, that requires saying no to other things that might take up their time. You will have to train them to manage their time in a way that will allow them to give a good amount of time to personal development within a small group structure.

Practices

How do we do life? What is our lifestyle? How do we walk this out? When values, priorities and practices join together they create what we call “culture”. Culture is what we do by nature because of the values, priorities and practices that we live by. Culture is the way in which we determine our community, or our communal reality, together as we move forward in life.

Culture is essential for healthy leadership. You can micro-lead every, single aspect and every, single person of your church or you can build rivers of culture that can carry people where you want them to go. The mistake that many make is that they will launch a small group program without having built the foundation first. If you do not have a culture that would facilitate small groups, please do not build a program yet. Build culture first. Your culture will be the foundation on which the house sits. Do not try to build a house without a foundation. Jesus warned us about doing that.

Program

Make sure your vision, values, priorities and practices are in place. Then you can institute a program.

Personnel

Finally, bring in your personnel and train them effectively. Because, all of the foundation work has been done for the house to be effectively seated.

Create a Plan with Your Primary Leadership Team

When you are developing all of these aspects, also develop a clear plan. How are you going to launch these small groups? What are you going after? Will you have generic groups? Will you have specialty groups? And, how will you distinguish between the two? What will be the common DNA between both groups? What will allow them to differentiate? Without a plan we end up frustrating ourselves tremendously by misallocating a lot of our resources and making mistakes.

Think linear and conceptually about this. Ask yourself, “How can we build this?” Draw on your team for this. Talk about it. Work with your team and build team consensus and ownership around a plan and blueprint for your small group ministry. There can only be one blueprint in the house. Every person will have their unique responsibilities in reference to the blueprint. But, we cannot have two blueprints that we are building from on the exact same foundation. This requires some dialogue and processing with your team.

Model The Ministry You Are Hoping to Multiply

Once you have your plan in place then, as a leadership team, start modeling what you are hoping to export. In other words, you cannot give it away unless you have it. You have to get it first. In one context or another, set aside time with your key leadership team to be the small group that you are hoping to replicate into your church. If you do not do it in the core, chances are, it will not express itself well in the outer perimeters of your church. For example, if you just teach eight people how to build small groups in your church, and then release those groups, you are going to have about a 50% attrition rate.

Develop a Self-Replicating Leadership Team

Start a single small group with a few leaders and yourself. Those leaders you have invited can invite a few secondary leaders into the group. In doing this, you will start to build a thriving small group in your leadership core. Living things grow for the inside out. Build your first small group in the leadership core and multiply it out from there.

Multiply Your Pilot Small Group

Once your first small group grows to a certain size and you have developed and multiplied leaders, then start two groups. After that, start three groups. All of the sudden, all the groups that are forming are coming from the same, basic DNA. This ensures a consistency of vision, values, priorities and practices that will keep your groups multiplying at the highest possible level of effectiveness possible.

Make sure that every group you develop has a self-reproducing plan. You will be reproducing new ministers in the context of the group. Allow the group to grow to a certain point. Once it has grown to that point, just like the process of mitosis, start a new small group. Build that philosophy into your basic structure from the very start. If you model this, it will carry out into the rest of the church. Multiply your pilot group. Then, multiply from that next group, totaling three groups. As a pastor, make sure that you have a presence in each of these groups, until you delegate your leadership to someone else.

4 Planning: The Power of Planning

Concept

The planning process is vital for having a reliable blueprint to build your small groups ministry from.

Intro

In this next section, we will begin by talking about the power of planning and how planning can work.

Establish the Blueprint

The question is, “How do I build a small group?” That is where you need to get down to the blueprint. How do you do that?

First of all, you need to hear from God. Pray and ask the Lord, “How can I best accomplish your purposes? How does small group structure fit into that?”

Remember, many churches believe that their job is to make disciples. But, they do not have a vehicle for doing that. Large group meetings are good and have many important purposes. Unfortunately, disciple-making on an individual basis is not accomplished very well in the form of a 45-minute worship set and a 45-minute lecture. It does not work. People need to process, interact and have opportunities to minister. They need to try and fail in certain ways of operation before they learn what their personal gifting’s are and how they can best bring those gifts forth.

Character

How can they develop character suitable to the kind of ministry that God has called them to? All of that personal development happens much better in a small group than it could every happen on a Sunday morning. You need to see that kind of vision. What is the Lord saying? How can we get there? And, then form the vision, you begin to extrapolate a plan.

Planning is Supernatural

Planning is like a blueprint. The scripture uses the building analogy again and again. We are living stones being built together into a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Eph. 2:22; 1 Peter 2:5) The Apostle Paul called himself a master builder. (1 Cor. 3:10) In other words, he was a general contractor. He took the architectural drawings of heaven and brought them to earth. He built that blueprint as part of his apostolic calling. All you have to do is read a random set of verses in the book of Proverbs and you will see how essential good plans are. We also have to match this with the statement, “Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it.” (Ps. 127:1) We know we need the presence and power of God in every ministry endeavor. This goes without saying, but it is good to say it anyway. Once you have thought about these things start your plan.

Without a Vision the People Go Unrestrained

First, what do you want to build? Look at the blueprint. Look at the architectural renderings of what kind of small group you want to build and break it down into a set of steps. Create a timeline for the blueprint in order to install your small groups over the next season. As the key pastor, you have to take main ownership and responsibility for this process.

The scripture says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." (Prov. 29:18, KJV) The word perish also means, "they wander off in every direction". Another translation says, "they go off unrestrained". This is similar to a verse in Judges that says, "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes." (Judges 17:6) Concerning starting small groups, do not allow every man to do what is right in his own eyes. It will be inconsistent. Some groups will do really well and others will do poorly. But, you will not be able to lead them all. They will all require specific micro-leadership rather than programmatic, structural leadership.

Specialty Groups

Make sure you define your primary model of small groups and that you build that model. Once that is firmly built, then allow for the development of other kinds of specialty groups. For example, groups that are focused on single mom. Or, groups focused on people that are struggling with sexual addiction. Or, groups that are focused on people with mental illnesses. They can be special interest groups. For example, groups for those who love to golf, or for those who like to discuss movies. You can create certain groups that are more specially-oriented. More importantly, make sure you have your core model in place before you move towards a lot of diversification. You want to make sure that you have a template that is reproducible and consistent.

Programming Without Planning Produces Chaos

Programming without planning can produce chaos. If you decide to start a small group ministry by simply starting one, without the proper care concerning how it is done, you will produce chaos.

Vision, Values and Priorities Are Essential Foundations

If you are careful to make sure your vision, values and priorities are clear then you can actually begin to create a set of structures for your small group ministry; not solely in terms of the quality of your meetings.

Quality

The quality of your meeting has to be great. It has to be filled with God's presence, openness and vulnerability, and good, short teachings from scripture that can be discussed and processed by the group. It should be a quality time for prophecy or praying for your unsaved friends. All of these kinds of different elements should be in a small group. Build, model and establish these elements throughout your planning process.

Infrastructure

In addition to quality, develop infrastructure as well. Aim for these two points as you build your groups within the planning process. One, you want quality groups. And, two, you want to have good bones.

Infrastructure is structure that is inside of something. If you look at scaffolding, that is an outside structure. But, if you look at a support system, it helps build something on the outside. In the same sense, a crab has an exoskeleton, or a skeleton on the outside of its body. Every, single ministry that you build as a pastor needs to have good structure. But, the structure needs to be buried under warm flesh. It is hard to hug a crab. But, you can hug a human, even though we have good bones on the inside. You want to build good leadership structures from the inside as well as good external experiences for people to have. You want people to experience the presence of God. You want people to experience one another. You want people to have

experiences that create a sense of longing for more. This is all part of the planning process. People will not go to a group that has a heavy exoskeleton. People do not want to be part of a group that is focused on structure alone. The small group has to go a lot deeper than that.

Ask yourself, “How do I build a quality experience for people with excellent infrastructure?” Think about building both experience and infrastructure simultaneously.

Defining The Culture

Define the culture of your group. What do you want your group to feel like as people come in? What are the core traditions, symbols and dynamics that you want to impart to your group? You have the key role as the lead pastor to make sure that those answers are in place before you give away a lot of leadership. You want to make sure that your small groups are consistent with your overall identity as a congregation. This comes down to your identity as a leader. You are the primary personification of the vision and expression of your church. Do not be afraid to communicate an expectation and mandate a certain compliance. You have to find your own way of doing this. But, there should be a set of commitments to core, cultural, components that will actually help your groups to thrive.

Plan On Lifestyle Adjustments

Finally, as part of the plan, encourage your people to start making lifestyle adjustments. If you are going to build small groups into your church, and people are not currently geared for it, you are going to have a bit of a challenge transitioning and getting them on board. This takes an ecosystem adjustment to accomplish. People’s lives will be filled with whatever they fill it with. If we want to institute a new level of commitment from people, we have to do so at the expense of something else. With most of us, we have to say “no” to one thing in order to say “yes” to another. Teach your people how to say “no” to less important things, so that they can embrace better quality things that will make them better people. In the process of doing that, make sure that whatever you are offering has the quality delivery so that people are rewarded for their sacrifice.

Building great small groups begin with careful planning. Bring your team into that planning process and create a blueprint that will help you become the church that God has called you to be.

5 Planning: From Concept to Reality

Concept

Planning your small groups ministry in every aspect will produce the outcome you envision; including vision, leadership, quality, infrastructure, goals, feedback, and multiplication.

Intro

In this section, we are addressing planning for small groups and how to bring your plan from a concept to a reality. We have a model that is based on certain principles that we are encouraging you to embrace. We believe these principles are the real heart of the gospel and the great commission. We believe that the expression of God's heart is maximized when every, single member is activated, motivated and mobilized according to their personal gifting; to become the people that God has called them to be.

It is possible that every leader has believed that their goal is to build people up into the fullness of what God has called them to be. But, when you look at the vehicle leaders use for that purpose, especially in churches that are only doing Sunday morning meetings, you realize that they do not have an appropriate vehicle because large groups favor the ministry of just a few leaders. Sunday morning meetings are not the correct vehicle. It is a good vehicle for *some things*. For example, it is good for the strong preaching of the key leader. This is important. It is good for corporate worship led by the best leadership that a church has in the worship ministry. This is also important and essential. It is good for the larger sense of community that a church has when we all gather together in a group. These are all good things. I would never stop Sunday morning services to do small groups.

On the other hand, if that is all you have, then you do not have an appropriate vehicle because, ultimately, once again, large groups favor the ministry of just a few leaders. Ten or fifteen people are going to be ministering in that context. The rest of the congregation are left as spectators. And, ultimately, those in the congregation degenerate into consumers. This is when the people go to church to receive but never give. Therefore, we never grow because we never become the people that God has called us to be. Part of that problem isn't the member's responsibility. It is ours as key leaders. If we are not creating a context in which every member can be known, grow, serve, minister, teach and share, then we will not see that kind of fruit borne in our church.

The Biblical Blueprint

The bible affirms planning. Throughout the scripture there has been different expressions of planning. This was initially seen through Abraham as a very amorphous, traveling, community. He had a tribal plan.

Moses had to mobilize over two million people to leave a land that was not their own and to come into a new land. There was a structure and a framework for that process. There was a plan. There were hiccups and difficulties along the way, but he kept adapting and working the plan to move towards the goal.

When David established his kingdom, he did so in ranks, oversights and understanding. He chose a capital city. He made it work. David provide the framework through a careful planning process to produce the outcome that he was longing for. We see this also continuing through the kings of the old testament in the developmental process.

When we get to the early Church, we also see the evidence of planning taking place. Initially, they were surprised by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand people came to Christ in one day. But, after that, their plan was to meet publicly and from house to house. That dynamic continued throughout the entire book of Acts and into the early Church. Planning is essential and endorsed in scripture again and again. We want an ear opened to the Lord so that we make sure we are not presenting plans that override His plans. We want to be in sync with Him to produce the outcome that He is longing for. He has placed this outcome in our hearts. As we approach planning from this standpoint, here are some simple instructions:

Describe The Vision

First, describe in detail the results that you are looking for. Are you building a small group ministry or are you taking the existing small group ministry and seeking to adapt it to some of the principles you are learning? What do you want the outcome to be? What do you want it to be in each individual's life? For instance, what outcome do you want concerning including and enfolding new and unreached people into your groups? What outcome are you looking for in terms of basic ministry multiplication in your groups? What outcome are you looking for in terms of the multiplication of the group into new small group expressions? You should have an end in mind for all these issues. It is good to begin with an end in your mind. We need to be intentional in our leadership processes.

The first step is to ask yourself:

1. What am I envisioning?
2. What is the outcome of what I am longing for?

Leaders and Infrastructure

The second step is to ask yourself:

1. What kind of leaders do I need?
2. How do I develop those leaders?

On one hand, you want to have a great meeting with an experience of God's presence, power and connection with each other so that it is a rewarding experience. On the second hand, you want to build infrastructure into the meeting to make sure that it is solid and reproducible. How do you do both of these things? How do you do it in a way where both hands, a great meeting and infrastructure, match? Start to plan from the standpoint of seeing vision. What do you see in the future? What is the outcome you are looking for? How do you put in the clear pieces?

Goals of an Effective Small Group

Next, what are the goals you have and how do you begin to measure against those goals? Start to put in metrics for measurement. You want to be able to answer the question, "How did we do?" The answer to this question is also a response to the question "What did we envision?" Try to articulate clearly what you want your groups to produce and start to put in metrics to measure how you are doing. Then, keep course correcting until you are achieving the best results you can on the outcomes that you are longing for.

Elements of a Great Gathering

The next step is to create feedback loops. How are we doing in terms of the quality of our meeting? How is the meetings attractiveness? How are new people being served when they come? How are existing members also being enriched in the context of the meeting? How do

we measure if we had a great meeting? Those kinds of questions need to be at the front and center as a leader.

Planning for Multiplication

Finally, you want to begin to multiply your small group. Multiplication is a principle we are emphasizing again and again. We want to multiply, not only ministers, but disciples, different kinds of gifting in the church and ministry expressions. The kingdom of God is about multiplication. One of the key attributes of life is that everything that is alive reproduces itself. Most of our churches are not reproducing well. That is a problem that we want to shift and fix. There are ways of shifting that. Some of the keys we are giving you will help in this shift.

Begin to gather your people together. Begin to process and create this plan. Begin to build towards this goal. Begin to envision small groups. Begin to strategize the improvement of both the quality of your gatherings and the infrastructure developments. Then, begin to make sure that the general qualities and elements of a healthy, thriving, community experience are happening. Then, make sure that replication is happening. In this process, you will be developing the foundation stones for destiny incubation in your church with the goal that every, single member would discover their gifts and calling. And, that every, single member would be activated according to their Divine design to fulfill their Divine destiny; so that your church can be built up and your region can be impacted for the glory of God.

6 Planning: Small Groups That Produce Outcomes

Concept

When planning for Small Groups always finalize and implement your proposal with your leadership team, as a team.

Intro

How do we develop thriving small groups as a primary component of who we are and what we are hoping to do to impact our region for Christ? This small group development plan that we are presenting is one that is based on personal discipleship, personal development, and, ultimately, personal multiplication.

We believe that every single person is different. Jesus designed us differently. The scripture tells us, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10) We believe that a basic entry level of every member into the discovery and development of their personal destiny is to be part of a small group. If they can be part of a small group where they have the permission to speak up, to pray for somebody, to enter into worship, share a prophetic word, etc., they will grow. Each of these aspects help them to grow, not only in character, but also in their function in Christ. We are envisioning small groups that release every member into ministry.

Strategic Planning

How can you release every member into ministry? How do you create a small group that produces this outcome? How do you begin the planning process?

First, refer to our worksheet for strategic planning. Through a series of carefully, crafted questions you can come down to a set of norms that you hope to institute as part of your new program. Pray and seek the Lord. Understand His heart for the vision of every member mobilization and multiplication through small groups. This is God’s strategy. Jesus had one plan to change the world and that was to make disciples. There was no plan B. Everything we do should serve that primary directive He gave us when He ascending into heaven which we call the great commission. Small groups exist as a primary delivery system for personal discipleship and development. In light of that, we have to understand that we develop according to people’s individual gifting and design. Everyone is designed differently. People are going to serve in different ways that are unique to them.

In addition to this, people are also called to be unified. How do we balance unity and diversity? This is a key challenge. People are also coming into our groups at different levels of development. Some will be highly developed. Others will be less developed. Some will be very mature. Some will be less mature. How do we create a place of belonging for everyone regardless of their developmental level? These are all the challenges of building a healthy, small group. This is why we need strategic planning. We want to create groups that thrive, grow and multiply. Our vision in San Francisco was to have a small group on every, single block of our city. We did not achieve that goal, but we had a small group in every, single neighborhood in our city. That was a good achievement for us. Dream in those directions. Let the Lord speak to you. Begin to strategically plan towards these outcomes.

Core Team Meeting to Refine the Plan

Once you have filled out your proposal for what the plan should be, meet with your core leadership team. Present the small group vision to them. Do not present it as a done deal. Present it as a proposal. With any kind of leadership change or developmental step that you take, always approach your leadership team with a proposal. There are three ways of approaching a leadership team:

1. First is the approach of saying, "I do not know what we should do. What do you guys think we should do?" This is a faulty leadership move. You are going to get a thousand ideas about what you should do. It is your responsibility to come up with at least one proposal for the direction you are going. For the most part, you are leading the team. Do not just walk in and say, "I do not know what to do. What do you guys think?"

2. Second, is prophetic direction. Sometimes, someone will have a dream, vision or revelation. They will come to you with an idea that becomes the Lord's idea for you. Although this happens, do not be exclusive with this method. You do not want to go into the core team meeting and say, "This is what the Lord told me to do and you guys have to follow whether you like it or not." This is a problematic way of leading.

3. Go into the meeting with a clear sense of what God is saying and present it to your team. You are opening the blueprint. You are saying, "I want to speak into this blueprint. I want you to look at it with me. Is this the best way of getting to the goal that we have in Christ?"

So, you have a strategic moment with God; both personally and through a strategic planning tool. Then, sit down with your team and begin to present a proposal. Let them interact with the proposal. Then, try to draw them to a conclusion and, ultimately, a commitment.

What are the steps that you need to take to prepare and to lay the foundation for what you hope to institute? What steps do you need to take a month down the road? Or, six months down the road? I work with many churches who are in this process. They tried home groups years ago and it did not work for them. But, they were not raising up the leaders that they were longing for. How do we do that? I am bringing them into a new understanding. We are going to give you some careful strategies concerning how to do that.

Finalize The Plan and Calendar The implementation

Next, finalize your plan and put it on your calendar. You have to turn your plan into goals. You have to set those goals clearly. Rethink it. Then, think of incidentals that also need to be put in place in order for that plan to be fulfilled.

Specialty Groups

Next, you have to decide how you are going to institute the larger picture. Apply our model in a way that is consistent with your values. Do this in a way that establishes the pilot program, or the template, for the standard group. Then, think about the possibility of specialty groups. Wait until you have a few, solid, primary expressions in place before you start diversifying. Start with the main, plain, primary small groups that are designed to develop people. Then, ultimately, multiply these kinds of developmental incubators around the body.

Reminder

Finally, as you are developing your small groups, make sure your emphasis on infrastructure development and the quality of the meetings are kept in equal tension to each other. Both are crucial and essential for a thriving, small group ministry to be born in your church and to bear fruit.

7 Team: Team Building is Essential

Concept

Team building is essential in small groups in order to raise up leaders who raise up leaders.

Intro

Once you have your plan in place, the next step in any ministry pioneering is to start building your team. Team building is essential to building a thriving small group. Once this process of team building is in place it will replicate itself more organically. Initially, as your piloting this process you are going to need to be much more intentional in your team building expression.

No Single-Leader Groups

It is important to have a team for anything you do. One of the biggest failures of small groups is when there is only a single leader or a leader couple. Again, everybody else becomes just a spectator in the group. The key to a healthy, thriving, small group is to have every, single member, eventually, activated. That does not mean that everyone has to be activated at once. But, you need to build team on every level. The healthiest small groups have a leader, assistant leader, and three or four other diverse job descriptions involved. This is essential because it gives everybody ownership of the group and a level of commitment. Everybody needs to show up at this point. It also gives everybody a reason to be there concerning their own personal development. It also gives people a set of responsibilities in order to easily recruit an assistant so that they can multiply themselves. You will have a multiplication dynamic from the very start that involves the simple designation of basic responsibilities within the small group. This is team building.

If you are shifting into our model from an existing small group ministry, with four or five groups currently, then you will have to adapt these instructions into what you have. We will be talking more specifically concerning starting from a pilot group. Even if you have a few groups going right now, allow them to continue and bring people into a pilot group anyway.

Senior Leader Ownership

As a senior leader, you are the curator of the primary vision of the church. You are the source of DNA, culture, values, priorities and practices for the church. You are called upon by God to personify these issues with a higher degree of responsibility than anyone on your team. If you are in a small group setting where you cannot delegate this responsibility then take it on yourself. You become the core leader of the first small group that you build as you seek to institute a small group ministry within your church.

Prototype Team

Now that you have finished the planning process, the next step is to build a team that commits to a season of meeting together to model and build a prototype of what you are hoping to export throughout your church. If you do not do it on an organic and intrinsic level, then it is going to be much harder for you to monitor the quality and consistency of what you are building, as well to mandate people's compliance to the way you want to build. But, if you build it in the core and multiply it there, you will find that every, single daughter or son expression of what you are building will have more intrinsic consistency with the pilot group than you could ever generate through other means.

Team Building

The first step is team building. Gather your team together and launch a pilot small group. What if a staff member does not want to be involved? There can be exceptions. But, concerning your pastor staff, I would not make an exception. If your administrator is too busy that could be an exception. But, I would still encourage every, single staff member to come; your paid staff and primary elders. One of the big mistakes that a lot of churches make is that they have people in eldership roles that do not have any real responsibility other than showing up at an elders meeting and advising a pastor. That is a huge mistake.

You have the power as a pastor to make sure that the people who are actually steering your church are the people that really deserve to be in that role. They are the people who have demonstrated their ability to care for the flock and multiply leaders. Why not make sure that both those issues are in sync? If you look at scripture, the biblical basis and qualification for eldership is the pastoring of the flock. It is written clearly in Acts 20, and also in 1 Peter 5. It is essential that the people who are steering the vessel, as you move forward, are the people who are actually engaged and representing the average member of the church. They are the ones who are to have relationships with the church members. They are the ones caring for and loving them.

Developing an Assistant

Build your small group team with elders and staff. Let's say you build a team of five to seven people who will be a part of your pilot group. This is excellent and a good start. Then, add others. You are going to build out from that core group and do the kind of meeting we have been addressing. Every leader that you assign in your group should be interested in bringing in somebody new. They should be committed to raising up an assistant in their area of responsibility. And, to disciple that person, not just delegate tasks to them.

Next, you want to make sure that every leader would commit to multiplying their specific role into the new people. They are to find an assistant and to give that person increasing levels of responsibility. The more assistant the merrier! In other words, if you can have five or six of those roles in your group and multiply them, then you will create a team dynamic. That is what we are longing for.

Team is the key to God's heart. God's value for team goes way beyond what we can think. When Jesus ascending on high He gave gifts to men. He created, not only the possibility of team, but, the responsibility of team. He took His attributes, those five elements of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, and invested them into certain individuals. The purpose of that investment was not that people would strut around in their positions. But, rather, that they would equip everyone else in their unique gifting. Team-ship is intrinsic to the very gospel that we preach. God is a God of unity. He is also a God of diversity. As we bring the diverse parts together we get what is called synergy. That is what you want as a pastor. You want to draw diverse individuals into a unified vision to create small groups that will release every member ministry into your church, so that you can impact your region with the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ as a result of every member doing their part in Christ.

8 Team: Biblical Understanding for Team Building

Concept

Team building is a pattern throughout scripture that should be modeled in your small group ministry.

Intro

How do you build a team? How do you understand team building from a biblical framework? If team is important, then you need to be able to find it in scripture. You need to be able to replicate the principles of scripture as you build the team that is going to bring forth the small group ministry in your church. All you have to do is look throughout scripture to see the different examples of team.

Old Testament Examples of Team Ministry

You see the concept of team in the life of Abraham and Moses as they built their teams. David had an amazing team. When you look at these different examples, you realize the importance of God being a God of diversity. He creates different attributes in different people. The scripture tells us, "...in the multitude of counselors there is safety." (Prov. 11:14) As you build a team look for diversity. Do not look for uniformity. Do not look for people to be exactly like you. Look for different gifts and different personalities represented. You want consistency in unity of values and priorities. There has to be different perspectives that are representing themselves in the team-ship process.

Jesus' Concentric Team

Why did Jesus choose twelve, main disciples? There is an interesting portrayal of the twelve tribes of Israel. Similarly, the seventy elders of Israel were replicated by the seventy in the gospels. These are interesting dynamics. But, the underlying principle was not the numbers themselves but the reality of team. Jesus chose three primary leaders to be close to Him. As you build a team, it should be concentric according to the model of Jesus. Jesus had three main leaders. Then, He had the other nine of the twelve. Then, He had seventy others. There is a ratio of one to three, one to three, and one to six. You sense a strategy that allows for different levels of development in the growth process of people. Some people are more responsible and accountable at a higher level than they are at a lower level. These are all aspects of team building that you want to be aware of that are evident in scripture.

The Apostle's Effective Ministry Teams

Paul and Barnabas functioned as a team together. They brought along John Mark, who had some issues, to their mission. And, during their next mission, Barnabas wanted to take John Mark but Paul did not. Their team actually separated. Paul chose Silas, Timothy and a few others to travel with him. Team is essential. Those people that traveled with Paul were then assigned to oversee different churches in different regions. Paul had a training process. He was developing people into their gifts and calling in Christ so that they could represent Jesus in the realms that they were assigned to. Luke was part of Paul's team also, and he wrote the Gospel according to Luke and the book of Acts!

Team building is built into the very fabric of scripture. It is part of the very philosophy of ministry that we operate in. Jesus said to His apostles, "It is necessary for you that I go away because if I stay here I will only be one person. But, if I go away I manifest myself in everyone." (John 16:7, paraphrased) The result of this is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27) Think of it like this:

When Jesus ascending on high it was like white light shining through the prism of the Church, refracting into, not just five colors, but a billion colors. God wants to be known. He is known as we come together and represent a greater picture of Christ than any of us could represent on our own. This is the heart of team-ship.

Teams Facilitate Every Member Ministry

As we launch into building small group ministries, they must be built by teams. There must be multiple players that have a role and a stake of responsibility. Each person must have a position in the group that can allow them to bring their personal aspect of Christ to the group. Each person can model to new people that they matter and that every individual's participation is important. Also, they are modeling their personal growth and development in a way that causes other people to see their progress and to see their own potential to grow. Team is a tremendous asset. We see examples of this in the old and new testament. In our natural world, we see tremendous examples of team-ship. In sports we see star teams working in tandem with one another; different individuals operate in different roles. Every member is essential even though some players may get more glory than the others. A football team has eleven people on the field. A baseball team has nine people on the field. Each person on a team has their personal role to play.

You see the power of team expressed in the corporate world and in the realm of government. Team is essential. As a wise builder and pastor, make sure that you are building your team and modeling with your team the quality of ministry that you hope to replicate and foster throughout your church. As you build your team, your primary team will be your prototype group. They become the pilot group for your small group ministry. Take the time to build it. If you can make fellowship and personal development meetings, with your staff, that are reproducible and separate from regular staff meetings a main priority for the next 12 to 16-weeks your staff will shift entirely. It is one thing to be co-workers working side by side to accomplish a task for Christ. It is another thing, however, to start delving into each other's lives, to start to discover the gold in each other and to start to pull that gold to the surface. As you do this with your staff and primary leadership team there will be tremendous results in their personal lives and in the life of your overall experience as a church. Take hold of those core members; your staff, the next layer of elders, a few additional leaders and those you trust and want to bring into a deeper relationship with yourself.

Gather together on a consistent basis. Gather weekly for a season. Map out a set of curriculum or topics that you will share over that time period. At the end of that season you will know your people better. They will know you better. In addition, you will have also pioneered a model of doing ministry that will be reproducible in the future. If you want to see powerful, self-replicating, people-developing, destiny-incubating groups in your church it lies with you to take the first step. The first step is building a team of leaders and empowering them over a period of time to replicate what you have sown into them. In doing this, your church can achieve its maximum impact in Christ.

9 Team: How to Build a Team

Concept

Building a team for a small groups ministry can be done by pulling from existing leaders or building a team from scratch using a simple five-step process; identify, recruit, train, deploy, support.

Intro

How do you build a team? If you are following our instructions and starting from the core of your church, then team building can be pretty easy. You have staff, elders, and the key leaders that you are already going to be inviting into this process. But, let's say that many of them do not want to be a part of the small group. This brings up a bit of a challenge. As you are beginning your initial recruiting process it is important to help everybody share the same value for this ministry.

Small Groups Are Not Optional

One of the problems with small group ministry, as a program, is that many churches institute it as a sidelight. They institute it as one of twenty programs that they are doing and it becomes optional for the average member. Do not do that. Make it one of the top two things that you are doing. Meet on Sunday mornings and meet in homes. When you add leaders meetings to that list, those are the top three areas that should be guiding your church forward. Sunday mornings has its various components, such as, children's church, worship, greeters, parking attendants, etc.; the secondary things that go under the Sunday celebration. Also, have your small groups and all the various sub-dimensions of that.

Do not do Sunday mornings and then have ten programs with one of those being small groups. If you take that approach, you will give the impression that small groups are not that important to the church leadership. But, give the impression that small groups are not an option to be an involved member of the church. On one hand they are optional, in the sense that we would never require anyone to go to one. On the other hand, this is our primary delivery system for kingdom development. If you are not a part of a small group, you are not really demonstrating that you want to be developed or committed to our fellowship at that level. For you to create an additional development track for others who do not want to be in a small group would not be helpful. Then you would have to micro-lead every, single person in your church rather than helping them to process through a structure that you want replicated throughout the entire church.

Building a Team from Your Leaders or Organically

You will have a simple recruiting process if you pull from your primary leaders. With a whole group in place, you can have a conversation about the plan and share the values for the small group. Assuming that everyone is in agreement, you set a date on the calendar and create the plan. You process the plan as a team and, finally, you are ready to launch the small group.

But, let's assume that you are not able to do that at the same level. If that is the case, then you will need to build a team from scratch. How do you do that?

John Wimber gave a helpful set of steps for team development. He called it I.R.T.D.M.N., which means, Identify, Recruit, Train, Deploy, Monitor, and Nurture. I have taken the step **Deploy** and in some teachings replaced it with **Launch** and the steps **Monitor** and **Nurture** and replaced

them with the word **Support**. So, we have five components for team development that can fit on a single hand.

Identify, Recruit, Train, Launch/Deploy, and Support

Identify, recruit, train, launch and support are the five steps to healthy leadership development and team building. Infrastructure development is the internal strength and structure of anything you are building. Concerning building a church, what is the difference between a church and a crowd? A crowd is a great number of people that gather because they may enjoy the worship or the preaching. That is good. But, if you are not developing leaders in the context of that, then you do not have the infrastructural strength to withstand some of the spiritual earthquakes that will come your way. You need to build your leaders, leadership connection, leadership cohesion, leadership teams and multiple teams in order for there to be infrastructural strength in your church. How do you do that?

Identify

First, you need to identify potential leaders. Identifying potential leaders is easy if they are already holding a position.

For example, let's say you approach an elder and talk to them about small groups. You tell the elder that you need them to be a part of small groups because this will be the primary way the eldership develops people in the church. Communicate to them that if they do not feel that they should be a part then you can talk about their role as an elder. Does it suit them at this time? You should not be harsh. If somebody has served you well, you should never be cut and dry or dismissive with them at all. But, I am saying that as you define your leadership structure and leadership team more carefully you have to make sure that people are assigned according to not only their gifting, but to their maturity in their willingness to serve.

If someone is not willing to serve, then you need to have that difficult discussion. You can say, "Maybe there is an area in the church where you can still be a part of us? We love you no matter what. But, we want you to serve in a way that is commensurate to your ability. We do not want to overextend you in a way that might do you or your family harm." Constantly measure those things. Identify. Who are they? Look for people. Constantly be on the hunt for those interested in worship, outreach, or helping people grow and discover their destiny. Look for those people. Always having discussions with them. Try to figure out what level they are at in their development so you can invite them into the appropriate team and see them grow into their gifting.

Recruit

Next, you recruit. Approach those you have identified and have a discussion with them. For example, say, "I notice this about you. I see these gifts in your life. I see what an amazing person you are. I would really like to invite you into our leadership team." If this is your core launch team for your pilot small group, you want to make sure you select those people well. You want to select them with a vision of them serving others later. Part of what you want to look for when you recruit is a long-term commitment.

Train

The next step is to train. The best way I know how to train somebody is to actually do things with them. Jesus did not have a training class. He spoke a few messages, but they were relatively short and brief. He brought the disciples with Him and He actually did ministry with them. That is how they learned to do ministry like Jesus. It was a day to day process of seeing Him do it and doing it with Him. That is key. Train people organically. There are also appropriate

times for pulling them aside and teaching them more about what you have trained them to do. That is also key to the process. In a small group, most of your training is going to happen in the actual process of the group and with feedback sessions afterwards.

Very simply and practically, to train people you:

1. Do it in front of them.
2. Do it with them and you have them help you do it.
3. Let them do it while you watch.
4. Leave them doing it.

To train you follow those four, simple steps. If you build it in and teach it to each of your leaders, they will have no trouble modeling and multiplying ministry in your midst.

Launch / Deploy

The next step is to launch or deploy. This is when you turn your leaders loose to fully operate in their role. For example, In the first, initial group, let's say you are going 16 weeks and you want somebody to model what it means to be an outreach worker or a worship leader in your small group. I would release them to do that right away under your care. Although, eventually you are going to release them to do it without you being there. You want to make sure that you are deploying leaders effectively and in a manner that is consistent with their developmental level.

Support

The final step is to support. John Wimber described support as monitoring and nurturing. To support you:

1. Monitor people. Answer the question, "how are you doing?"
2. Then, nurture them. Answer the question, "How can I help you grow?"

This is support. Make sure that there is ongoing support for your people. That you are constantly building them up. You are constantly checking in with them. Ask questions like, "How did your meeting go last week? Were there any challenges? How can I help you? How can I support you?" Those kinds of questions mean a tremendous amount to every, single leader as their growing and becoming who God has called them to be.

You want to make sure that you are in your leaders lives around these five areas: identify, recruit, train, launch, support.

Feedback

Next, keep a feedback loop in place. As you develop your team, you want to make sure that there is constant feedback because they need to discharge. If they feel like they cannot talk freely about their experience or that they will disappoint you if they raise a difficulty or problem, then they are going to shut down around that issue. That issue will not go away. It will just build up in their hearts, and eventually become a point of frustration, resentment, difficulty, or division. You want to make sure that you are constantly allowing feedback. Once you determine that they are supposed to be on your team; that you are working together, you are in sync with one another, you share values, you share vision, you know where you are going and you are getting there together, then move into a place where there is an open feedback loop. Move into a place where you are making course corrections as well as honoring the feedback you are getting from the people you are leading. So, that you can lead them into the multiplication process.

Multiplication

The final step is to lead them through the first multiplication. You should have one, strong group that you have built up to 15 or 20 people over a period of time. You should have one group that you have done the destiny discovery process with, you have worked with your team, you have assigned some diverse job descriptions and you have built your team. When they have started personally multiplying themselves by inviting new people into the group, then, after several weeks, about 16 to 20 weeks, you are ready to multiply your small group.

10 Model: Modeling a Fruitful Experience

Concept

Modeling small groups is crucial to presenting a format that people can follow into the future. Most of what we need to know is caught not taught.

Intro

So far, we have given an overview of the broader picture of small groups. Why are they important? What do they accomplish through a biblical standpoint? Why should we pursue them? How should we pursue them? Then, we talked about planning. To be able to institute anything, you have to go through a careful planning process that includes your values, vision, etc. You begin to look at the aspects of who you are so that you can build a good foundation under the programs that you install into your church. We also talked about team building. And, how to build an effective team that will accomplish the best result for you as you grow small groups.

Relational Discipleship

Remember, the whole vision here is to fulfill the great commission. Many churches have discipleship programs but usually what that looks like is somebody sitting in a classroom listening to a discipleship lecture. Discipleship has to be “life-on-life” as my friend Banning Liebscher says. It has to be interactive, connected and relational.

Small groups can accomplish many purposes at once. A small group can be a place of connecting with Jesus in worship and prayer. It can be a place of receiving ministry and giving ministry to others. It can be a place of hearing a good mid-week teaching. It can be a place of personal discipleship where people are having relational interaction with each other that causes them to grow and confront broken issues in their lives.

Small Groups Produce Fruit

God has two primary means of delivering kingdom to the average person. One, is meeting publicly. The other is meeting house to house, as it says in Acts 2 and 20. This was the normal pattern of the early Church. It should also be the normal pattern for us, not because God loves and wants us to be focused on structure, but so we can be focused on the fruit that can be born in each different structure.

The large group is a great place to hear the apostolic teaching of your main leader, to be part of the corporate worship experience and to invite the presence of God. It is this larger experience of being part of a tribe that gives us the sense that we are moving forward. But, if that is all you offer as a church, or things similar, then you are never going to make disciples at an intrinsic level. You have to have another context; a small group context. Whether it is in a home, coffee shop, or at a lunch table, there has to be a place for individuals in your church to be able to minister to one another and walk out their faith in a real life way in relationship to each other. That is the only way that they are going to grow, be confronted or challenged about areas that they need to grow in and be able to experience and start to identify their gifts and calling. This all happens in the context of real life interaction with real people. Small groups are essential to the well-being of every church.

Great Experiences of God and Others

Small groups are really two meetings in one. They are the meeting itself, which is the worship, the presence of God and the encounter with the people and the wise leadership. A great meeting experience with a spiritual family is something that people want to come back to again and again.

Infrastructure

Next, is the issue of infrastructure. This happens a bit behind the scenes. This involves the development of leaders within your group who can grow, develop other leaders and multiply their leadership responsibilities into somebody else's life. After that happens, you can multiply the whole group, start a second group in a different neighborhood, thereby meeting a different group of people.

It is important to develop the infrastructure and the quality of the meeting together. We want to make sure that you are concentrating on both as we move forward.

Modeling Process

We are going to be talking about modeling in your first, initial, small group. By now, you have recruited your team and brought them together. You are beginning to do with them what you are hoping to reproduce in the lives of the other members of your church. The process of replication is happening.

You are doing two things simultaneously at the core leadership level. One, you are having leadership contact with individuals and assigning roles and responsibilities within the group. And, two, you are making sure a high-quality experience is had by all attending the group. You are making sure that this is a meeting that people long to come to because it brings so much hope and life to their being. These are the two goals that we have, simultaneously, in the modeling of new small groups.

The Importance of Modeling

Why is it important to model small groups? Why can't you just teach about small groups in a classroom or give people a binder full of information? Most of Christianity is not taught, it is caught. The things that we want to understand about Jesus are usually infused into us. They are imparted to us not simply instructed to us. Although, we do need instruction. There needs to be good, clear teaching from seasoned leaders who know the word of God. That is essential. But, we also need to be around others so we can see how they do it. We need to allow their way of doing things to affect us. That is what we call modeling.

Culture and DNA is Caught and Taught

You need to model your small group among your leaders. Create a model, a culture and a DNA that you want to have replicated throughout your church.

I recommend, for a teaching focus, to spend time in one of the gospels, the book of Acts, the sermon on the mount, or studying the parables. Choose something that is very simple and Christ centered. Choose something that focuses both on the supernatural as well as on the natural world. Another approach that you could take, in terms of teaching content, is to do a simple destiny discovery in the first eight weeks of your group. Have a couple of meetings where you get to know each other. Eat a couple of meals together. Instead of gathering at 7pm, gather at 6pm and eat a meal together. Hang out, worship and pray for each other. Those are

excellent points of connection to begin a meeting. In the process of all this, you are modeling how much you want an informal relationship above all.

Once you are two weeks in, start doing more of a serious discovery of gifting in each person. You could use our destiny discovery tools to do that (www.destinyfinder.com) or develop something similar of your own. Or, you could go through a gospel. Process around simple things. Never teach more than 15 minutes. In other words, make it a power-packed 15 minutes. Never have more teaching than you are able to have an equal amount of discussion. You want people interacting. You want to build a sense of interaction and connection among your people. This is super essential because we are longing for them to discover their own gifting so that they can function in the fullness of Christ. You want to incubate their gifts. It is necessary for you to be able to allow them to speak up as emerging leaders.

You are imparting to your people in the way that you are modeling leadership; how you do your announcements, how you welcome the group at the beginning, how you lead into worship times and invite prophetic interaction, how you lead somebody who is overseeing the outreach of the group, how you allow them to share a scripture every week or two about the lost, how the group will write down and pray for each other's friends. You are modeling leadership in allowing each member within the group to have a place. You may have meals or celebrate birthdays that are within a certain month during a meeting. Give the community developing person, who is doing the pastoral work of connecting everybody, air-time in the group. Inquire if there are any needs in the group? Ask your group what you can pray for as a group? You will be modeling amazing connection. *Modeling is crucial to presenting a format that people can follow into the future.*

It is hard to reproduce something unless you effectively model what your hoping to reproduce. As the leader, have a sense of the style, tone, and atmosphere that you want to create in your small groups. You want to make sure that they start and stop on time. You want to make sure that visitors are honored. You want to make sure that hospitality is being exercised. You have the main responsibility for all of these factors. Model it first with your core team. Then, as you multiply out from there you will see that same set of DNA being replicated in the groups you reproduce. Because, ultimately, God has anointed you to reproduce kingdom reality both in large and small groups so that your people can grow into the fullness of who God's called them to be.

11 Model: Primary Team and Pilot Group

Concept

Small groups should be modeled using the early Church pattern of Acts 2:42-45 and the five-fold ministry in order to have the elements it needs to thrive.

Intro

Small groups have made a tremendous difference in my life. I have been in small, intimate groups, from 6 to 25 people, since the moment I was saved. There were enough people in those groups to get to know everyone and to share with everyone in the room. Small groups are one of the necessary components of church. If we only had the large group meetings we would all turn into a bunch of spectators. It is the small group meeting that activates every member to serve according to God's gift and calling in their life. Ultimately, Jesus can be fully glorified in His Church as each member does their part. That is why we are so passionate about small groups.

In this section, we are talking about modeling to your primary team and to your pilot group how you do small group. As a key leader, maybe you have not had much small group experience. That is okay. I think you know how to lead. You know how to generate the kind of atmosphere that you are longing for. If you do not know how to do this, then talk to a friend or check in with some other people who have gone further in this area. Small group leadership is a piece of cake. But, it does need several elements in place.

What Elements Produce a Thriving Small Group?

Scripture says, in the book of Acts, that 3,000 people came to Christ on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit was poured out. There is a summary of this incident in Acts 2:42-45. It says, "And they continued steadfastly..." in several components:

1. The apostle's teaching
2. Fellowship
3. Breaking of bread
4. Prayers
5. Signs and wonders
6. They shared all their goods with one another. There was a sense of community that was being developed.

Teaching

The apostles teaching is a real, key issue. The apostles had been with Jesus. They talked publicly, every day, about what Jesus said. Then, they would take that into small groups and digest it. In Acts, it says, "They continued steadfastly in the apostles teaching." They would process together. They would ask questions such as, "What did Jesus say about that? What did he say about this issue? How can we live this out? How can we be the true people of Christ?"

Fellowship

Fellowship is the word "koinonia" in the Greek. It means to have life in common. They began to build a common faith. They were able to interact with each other, not only about their personal values and priorities, but also about where they were going and their sense of destiny and movement as a people. They had common ground that they built together. That is what fellowship is all about.

Communion

The third component was the breaking of bread. When we see that, we automatically think of a little piece of unleavened bread and a little tiny cup of wine or grape juice. That is not quite accurate. Their love feasts were grand events. Certainly, they would celebrate the Lord's supper as part of their love feasts, but that was only a small portion of it. I have a friend who plants small groups. He has about 4,000 relating to him. His simplest form of small group is to have a meal together and find Jesus in the meal. Although I agree with that ministry philosophy, there needs to be more structure and diversity within the focus of the group. Make sure that you are communing together around food because food unites people like nothing else can. Do this once a month or every other week. Rotate through different houses for a season. It is really fun to be creative and with all of these different types of ideas.

Every small group needs time in the word; the short teaching with led discussion. Every small group needs fellowship; sharing your hearts, needs, wants, desires, and dreams with one another. Every group should have occasional and regular gatherings to eat and enjoy life together: specifically, to break bread around the Lord's supper.

Prayer

Next, there should be a dynamic of prayer and vertical interaction with God. In most churches these days, we do not have much to do with prayer in the classic sense, although we pray together at some points. There are certain churches such as the International House of Prayer, that is focused on 24/7 prayer. But for most of us, our primary prayer methodology is singing together. We have prayers that are written into choruses that we sing. And, that becomes our basis of praying together. This vertical interaction with God can be through worship, song, a guitar or a keyboard played in the small group. You may not have someone in the group anointed to do that. There may not be anyone who can play an instrument. You can have somebody be a DJ. They can put together a list of three or four songs. If you listen and wait on the Lord during those songs that can be a rich, spiritual experience. We long for the presence of God and need to touch Him on a regular basis; corporately in the big gathering, corporately in the small gathering and personally.

Signs and Wonders

In Acts 2, we see signs and wonders being done through the hands of the apostles. Make sure that you are praying for healings and miracles in your small groups. This is a great time for your people to learn how to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to be able to course correct and to be refined in the process of that learning.

Community

Another key component of small groups is community. The scripture says that they were together. They shared meals together. They ended up connecting with each other. They experienced community. They shared their wealth with each other. They looked out for one another.

As you are modeling your small groups, make sure that you have some variety of these things happening at every meeting. Hopefully, all of these components are happening at every meeting.

Five-Fold Wineskin

We want a full menu of Christ in the groups, through different job descriptions, being led by different people, representing different aspects of Christ.

Apostolic: Leader

The leader will be the main person teaching, although there may be a teacher who teaches during that time. But, the small group leader is guiding, casting vision and leading the group where it needs to go. The leader is working with the development of infrastructure and overseeing the quality of the meeting.

Prophetic: Worship Worker

Have somebody who is responsible for the sense of God's presence. We call them worship workers. They are the ones who help keep people in the presence of God.

Evangelistic: Outreach

Have an outreach worker. Have someone who keeps the group focused outward. Maybe every six weeks do a unified outreach. But, every day we should be talking to our friends about Jesus. We need someone to consult with about that.

Pastoral: Community

The pastoral person does the hosting of the group at his or her house. That is such an important role.

Teacher: Teaching

Have somebody who can bring new people up to speed. That is the person we can utilize for teaching and training.

Represent each of the five ministry gifts of Christ in your small group structure. If you do not have all five, make sure that you have, at least, two to four good job descriptions in your group. Make sure that they are diverse enough so that different people have different points of participation. Model diversity, unity, presence and real relationships. Model a quality of meeting that is superior to anything people could get anywhere else on a mid-week night. Model a meeting that is better than a movie or a TV show that someone may be addicted to. Model a meeting that brings people into a place of fellowship that results in a high reward.

As the leader, start working within your small group to build the infrastructure. Find leaders that are committed to you. Have your leaders start locating and recruiting other people to work with concerning their personal areas of responsibility. And, pretty soon you will be building a self-replicating, leadership development dynamic within your small group that is both producing great meetings and great infrastructural development. So that, ultimately, people are truly finding their destiny. They are growing up into their life purpose. You get the privilege to watch it, be there and, in a sense, be the conductor of that orchestra. When the group multiplies you will have tremendous fruit that multiplies because people are growing up in Christ and serving others according to the gifts God's given them. Raise up your church by creating small groups that foster, develop and incubate individual gifting and calling in Christ.

12 Model: Modeling a Reproducible Small Group to Your First Team.

Concept

If you can create a small group model that is simple, reproducible, efficient, effective, and excellent, then you have the foundations in place for a movement of reproducible small groups.

Intro

How do you actually model a small group as a pastor? Modeling is crucial because, ultimately, people need to see something. They need to experience something in order for them to replicate it. It is important for people to hear teachings, see an outline and to see all the different points and aspects of building a small group. Your people need to see how small groups fit biblically. I value that highly. But, unless they experience it and participate in a process, it will be very hard for them to replicate it. Your goal is not to have the appearance of a great program just because you taught a class. The goal is to make sure that your people are doing something that you intended for them to do. As a pastor, you are responsible to gather your team, elders, staff, and a few additional leaders from your church to build a pilot program small group expression of your church.

A Success Story

I read a book about 25 years ago by a man named Juan Carlos Ortiz. Juan Carlos was in Argentina about 35 years ago. He took over a large church. I believe it was a couple thousand members. But, it was a crowd not a church. He did exactly what I am advising you to do. He started with his core staff. He met with them for six months. Then, he multiplied them into two small groups. He oversaw both of the small groups for a season. Then, he multiplied them into four small groups. Then, he multiplied them into six small groups. In two years, he had his entire 2,000-member church in small groups. They had his DNA and his heart. They had seen the model of what he had built and they were able to replicate it. They were able to be a more cohesive, impactful church because he had taken the time to start a small group in the leadership core and work his way outward. You can do this. It is not that hard. The payoff will be tremendously worth it. Whatever you build is what others will build after your gone or after you have pulled out and are back to only pastoring. They will build what you built with them. Therefore, you want to be in the center of the building process as it begins.

Building a Reproducible Model

How do you do that? How do you begin to build a model that is reproducible?

Simple

First of all, it has to be simple. It has to be something that everybody can have a piece of. Sometimes we make things too complicated and we put, as it were, the cookies on the highest shelf. We need to bring them down to the lowest shelf. We need to discover what is essential. What is the least common denominator? What does high-intensity Christianity look like? We need to be able to experience that together and model it to our team members.

Effective

It needs to be effective. In other words, you want to see testimonies coming out of every group. Share those testimonies within the group. The more you share testimonies the more people get

a revelation that God is with them and working. It is an important asset to every group to share what God is doing in people's lives. So, make sure your small group is effective. Make sure there is measurable fruit and movement forward.

Efficient

It also has to be efficient. You want to make sure you are not wasting time in your groups but that every aspect of what your building is high quality and has a high payoff for your members. You want them to regret missing a night or leaving early, even if they have to, because you have provided such a rich experience in every aspect of the meeting. The worship, teaching and discussion time is rich and well led. The ministry time to one another is powerful and effective. Build efficiency within your meeting and a sense of growth and dynamic.

Excellent

Finally, be excellent. Take time to prepare. Take time to think about what you are going to say before you say it. Make sure that you are being intentional because excellence is such a powerful asset to any kingdom endeavor. Look at those different kinds of things and foreshadow them. Do a great job of being a key leader because you are modeling leadership for the next generation.

Work Towards Multiplication

Begin to work towards multiplication. Have a reproducible model. Have a great meeting on a consistent basis where most of them are really rich and people are returning. The group is growing. More people are starting to come after you have laid the foundation.

Closed Group

I would recommend having a closed group for a season while you gather your initial eight to ten people and you meet with them to model. Meet together with your key leaders, apart from anybody else, for a season while you are tuning the model. This is important.

Open Group

Then, at a certain point, you are going to want to open up the group and grow. When you open it up and grow you get new people that can be recruited into new positions of leadership. You can start to develop more infrastructure due to other leaders in the group. The group, then, begins to grow.

Multiply into Two Small Groups

When the group grows to fifteen to twenty people, you are almost ready to multiply; as long as each job description that you have identified is represented in an assistant as well as a leader. Once that happens, then you are able to mix and match your leaders and assistants to form two, new fully-staffed teams for an effective, powerful meeting. Once that happens, you know you are on the road to successful, ongoing multiplication. You will see tremendous fruit from this.

September Multiplication and Marketing

Now again, I do not think you will ever see 100% of your groups multiply 100% of the time. You may find that some will want to multiply over a year. Let's say you start your group in September. Many of us do this because summer is such a broken time due to people being on vacation and doing different things. It is kind of like the church fiscal year, starting in September. Start your groups then. In the first or second week of September, have a small group fair after

church on a Sunday. Plan to teach on fellowship during the church service. Set up all your tables and have each small group have a picture of their team and what they are doing on the tables. What is their vision and how are they going to accomplish it? People can go from table to table and find a small group that suits them.

Artificial Insemination

Also, do what we call artificial insemination. We are aware that not every group is going to multiply every year or every six months. Build in a training process, in the summer, for assistant leaders to multiply or start new groups independent of a multiplication process in their existing groups. Do this in order to create maximum options for pioneering new expressions. We do not want to artificially hold things back because of our value for organic multiplication. Be willing to go beyond that and start new groups separately.

The point that I am making for you is that if you can create a model that is simple, reproducible, efficient, effective, and excellent, then you have the foundations in place for a movement of small groups.

Multiply into Three Small Groups

Once you multiply, then you oversee both small groups. Multiply a third small group and rotate through them, missing one different group per week. Then, start raising up life group coaches to be able to oversee new multiplication groups. Soon, you will have a scalable, self-reproducing model that will cause dozens and dozens of small groups to emerge.

You can produce this process by which every, single member in your church is connected to one another in a committed growth relationship. And, where they are discovering their destiny, becoming who God's called them to be, and moving into new levels of accountability, responsibility and authority in Christ. Because, you have created a system for them to grow up into the fullness of who God has created them to be.

13 Leadership Development – Multiplication is The Key to Success

Concept

Small groups facilitate leadership development which is the greatest commission of Christ; for every believer to be in the process of development within their specific calling.

Intro

In this section, I want to talk about developing leaders. Leadership multiplication is the key to ministry success, especially from an infrastructural standpoint. I have had the privilege, over the years, of coaching well over 100 churches. One of their greatest weaknesses of about 90% of them was their inability to effectively develop leaders. Part of the reason for this was not because the pastor did not want to, care about it or see it as a biblical priority. They simply did not have a system in place. They did not have a structure that could facilitate the kind of leadership development that they knew they needed to have. The result was random, hit-and-miss leadership development. Some people would spring up and suddenly become great leaders. Or, they would adopt a leader that was from a different church into their church. Although, sometimes that does not work out well because they may not know your values or priorities. They may do well at first, but have conflict with you later. It is a difficult situation.

There are also problems with other leadership dynamics. For instance, many of your most faithful people are not necessarily your most dynamic, high-level leaders. You have to work that out as well. Leadership development is challenging, especially when the majority of your time, energy, and money as a church is spent on maintenance; simply maintaining your building, Sunday program, deficient workers, volunteer base, etc. The result is that you have no juice left over. You have no energy, focus or vision left over for going after new leaders and developing them.

The solution to that problem is small groups. If you do your small groups correctly, you will build the grassroots, leadership development culture into the small groups. If you build it in carefully from the core and build it out with a few levels of multiplication, it will become self-sustaining beyond that. It will become a cultural asset that you possess, not something you have to keep re-engineering and installing in order to work.

Understanding the Great Commission

It is really important that we understand that the great commission was the very last words of Jesus. If you were about to die and you knew you only had five minutes to say the most important things that would cause the people you have trained to change the world in your absence what would they be? What would you say to them? I believe that Jesus said the right thing. He said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." In other words, what Jesus accomplished on the cross was so powerful and effectual that it actually repossessed all the given authority in the universe to Christ. Christ, in that authority, commissions us and says, "Go, therefore, as a result of all that I have said to you, and make disciples out of every nation." (Matt. 28:19, paraphrase) Some people will also say "of all nations." In other words, we need to disciple nations. That is not inaccurate. But, the primary application of the great commission is towards personal leadership development. We are supposed to go and make disciples.

The Discipleship Continuum

The discipleship continuum is very long. It begins the moment you first hear about Christ. In fact, you can reasonably say that it begins before that because Jesus is drawing you all the way. But, the moment you accept him is the moment that discipleship is inaugurated. When you accept Him and journey all the way through your developmental process; that is the full discipleship continuum. Until the point where you are a great leader or even a leader of leaders is all discipleship. In fact, we always tell our leaders, be a disciple first and a leader second. Let leadership be a second priority to you because, ultimately, every good leader is a lifelong learner. We want to be in a learning posture, letting all of our leadership flow out of the humble spirit of being a learner.

Families Raise Adults Not Children

Disciple-making is a long continuum. It is journeying from childhood to being a grandparent.

- You were born.
- You were initially just cared for as an infant.
- You were given a little bit of responsibility as a toddler.
- You were given more responsibility as you grew up.
- Eventually, at 15 you get your driver's license.
- You complete High School at 18.
- You move on to some professional work after that.

In other words, you go through a process.

I was married at 24. I have seven children now. I am a grandfather of four children. My discipleship as a human being has been a long continuum. This is what leadership development is supposed to be like in the average church. Nobody stops or plateaus. Everybody moves from one stage to the next because that is what God has called us to do; to become just like Jesus. Paul said, "My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." (Gal. 4:19) He said, I want to see you reflect Jesus in His fullness. Small groups can help to generate that because they are open to everyone. Someone can come in as a relatively new believer and be invited into levels of ministry at a very early stage of their development. People are known by others; therefore, character development is happening. It is a perfect opportunity for people to grow.

Jesus said that we make disciples by teaching them to do everything that He commanded the apostles to do (Matt. 28:20). We need a delivery system for that process. Home groups are a great place to learn everything that Jesus commanded us. He also said, "I am with you always, *even to the end of the age.*" (Matt. 28:20) Small groups are a great place to encounter Jesus' presence and power and the life of Jesus in other people on an ongoing basis until you grow up into the fullness of who He has called you to be.

Everyone is Called to Be a Leader

Everyone is called to be a leader at some level. I do not have any equivocation concerning this. If you are a parent, then you are a leader whether you like it or not. Simply being a follower of the Lord Jesus makes you a step or two ahead of everyone else who is not. You have leadership in you even if you do not feel like a leader. Even if you feel you have deficiencies in your leadership, you are still called to be a leader. Now, obviously I am speaking to pastors, but this is a word I would speak to every member of your congregation. Small groups are built to help you grow into leadership.

Scale

Some people will only ever lead on a one-to-one basis. That is their calling. They do their best work interacting with only one person. That is leadership. Some people are leaders of groups of 10's or 50's, as seen in the story of Jethro and Moses. There are different levels on the scale of leadership.

Scope

There are different scopes of leadership. Are you a CEO, VP or middle management? Have these different levels of scope in leadership.

Sphere

There are different spheres of leadership. There are five spheres that are key for us to touch and transform as believers. These spheres are family, culture, economics, government, and faith. These are the primary spheres that tend to govern human thought and behavior. And, if we can influence those spheres, we can create a more hospitable environment for people to come to, grow and flourish in Christ. Therefore, we are called to lead in all of these spheres. In fact, many of the leaders in your church will not be called to lead in your church but in the marketplace. You need to be wise enough, so that when the appropriate time comes you can release them to do their ministry by not drawing on them to do more ministry within the church. Because, ultimately, their best work will be done outside of the church walls as you help them discern their true calling and destiny.

Everyone Can Learn by Leading in the Church

At the same time, everyone can learn something from leading in the church. In other words, learning how to lead a small group is the most basic leadership tool that anybody can have in their tool box. In fact, I have hired many pastors over the years. Many of them graduated seminary. They spent six to eight years in pastoral training and spent thousands and thousands of dollars. Their average training level was less than my average home group leader. In other words, they were unable to do the essential things that a home group leader could do; teach, lead worship, gather people, share vision, pray for the sick and create community in environments where people are sharing with one another. They were deficient because all of their learning had taken place in a classroom. They were not learning in the full measure of an experiential lifestyle.

We Can Train World Changing Leaders

It is in you to raise up, in your church, thriving, world-changing leaders. One of the best vehicles for accomplishing this is a small group. Whether that small group meets at a home, church building, coffee shop or cubicle, you can bring transformation and development into people's lives by giving them the opportunity to come into small groups. And, allowing them to be raised up in that small group so that they may, ultimately, someday even be the leader of that group as it multiplies out to other leaders. Your people can learn the key leadership skills of Christ so that they can bring transformation to the world around them.

14 Leadership Development: Essential to the Discipleship Continuum

Concept

Every excellent small group provides an abundant measure of these five, essential elements as main keys to develop its members; identity, community, maturity, responsibility, and destiny.

Intro

When you look at the scriptures as a whole you can see how important leadership is to God. Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the 12 sons, Joseph, Esther, and Deborah were all amazing leaders; men and women of God. They were Judges, Kings, Prophets and leaders that walked throughout the face of the earth. Our commission in Christ is to raise up disciples, but part of the discipleship continuum is leadership. We want to see leaders raised up who will change the world. Not only in the church but also sprinkled throughout the marketplace. Leaders that have been impacted by the church and released to be apostolic or prophetic within the marketplace in order to bring transformation to the world around them. Small groups are such a powerful leadership development tool for this.

In fact, many pastors have had ongoing leadership classes or leadership support groups. Those are great. They are great supplements but not great substitutes for an actual, organic, leadership development process. This is what home groups can deliver in a way that a classroom could never deliver. Allow the value for small groups to emerge in your heart and maintain it because it is a great methodology; if you can find the slipstream of leadership development in its context. Remember, meetings need to be powerful, rich and good. But, simultaneously you are building an infrastructure of leadership development within the group. Both are necessary for a healthy, thriving, long-term small group ministry.

The Five Essentials of Development

What is leadership development all about? There are five things that are intrinsic to every father and mother teaching a child how to grow up in life. These five areas are also intrinsic to leadership development. The parallel between family and kingdom is so near and dear. The same dynamics that take place with a young child growing up into adulthood in a home is almost identical to somebody growing up in the kingdom of God. The five essential areas of development are:

1. Identity
2. Community
3. Maturity
4. Responsibility
5. Destiny

Every excellent home provides an abundant measure of these five elements to enrich a child to become who God has called them to be.

Identity

The first area of development is identity. As people are receiving their identity, they get a revelation that they are part of your family. They have your last name. They are important to you. They matter to you. They are significant to you. You care about them. You serve and love them. Those things are essential to establish a sense of secure identity within a person. They

need to know who their spiritual dad and mom is. They need to know what their spiritual first and last name is. They need to know who their spiritual brothers and sisters are. All of them provide a triangulation of identity enforcement that results in a secure child.

If those things are unstable, if they feel like they are part of a broken home, or have a single mom there can be a deficiency in their growth. They can still grow up well but there has to be supplements. They will be lacking certain, important ingredients to reaffirm who they are and who God believes they are. Identity is ultimately determined by who God says you are. Adopt who God says you are and own it within yourself. But, that is delivered through the family. And, so it is really important that we emphasize identity as foundational. Every home group should make people feel that they are part of a community. That they are loved. That they are a son or daughter of the Most High. That you care about them. Every, single time you gather speak identity over people; particularly over your emerging leaders. They need to know that they are on the right path, moving forward in what God has for them.

Community

The second area of development is community. Family produces a sense of community because you are relating, at least, to your mom and dad if you are an only child. You are also relating to brothers and sisters. You also have extended family like uncles, aunts, etc. You are in a community that you cannot, in a sense, escape from. You must learn how to grow in your relational skills. It is the same idea when you are in a small group. When you are in a small group you are exposed to having to relate to the people around you. You have a responsibility to connect with them. You need to get to know them, especially if you are an aspiring leader. As you grow in leadership, you have to move from a place of just being the receiver of relational blessing to being the initiator and giver of it. Community needs to be in every small group your building as your developing leaders. Leaders are built on identity and they are built into community.

Maturity

The third area of development is maturity. Maturity is fascinating. God chose, in all His infinite wisdom, to make human beings infinitely immature when He created them. In other words, He could of had us be born at 21-years old, as full, grown adults. But, He did not. He chose to create us as a helpless infant at our birth. Then, there is an 18 to 25-year process of maturing from that infancy to a place of full maturity in natural life. The challenge is that people can mature physically and biologically, but not mature in character and personal development. This is a tragedy. We want to make sure that this kind of maturity is not only happening in families but also in our small groups. We want people to grow up into Christ in all things. Growing up into Jesus is a process that requires conversation. It requires confrontation. It requires a challenge. It requires praying for one another. This is how you develop leaders. Leaders are built with identity, in the context of community, with a goal for maturity. Sow into people in that way. Challenge the areas where they are not measuring up in their growth process. The result will be that they will become more mature, fully representing Christ in the earth.

Responsibility

The fourth area of development is responsibility. No one can grow up fully in life without taking on incremental levels of increasing responsibility. This is the reason I had my children begin cleaning their bedrooms at three years old. It could have been easier to clean their bedrooms myself. There would have been less fuss and problems. But, if they do not learn to clean their room at three, they will not be ready to clear their plate at five. If they do not learn how to clear their plate at five, then they will not be ready to do the dishes at seven. If they do not learn how to do the dishes at seven, then they will not be ready to balance their checkbook at twelve when they have their first, part-time job. Or, do the mowing at fourteen. Or, learn how to drive at

sixteen. In other words, increasing, incremental responsibility does something inside of a person that induces self-respect and growth. It increases people's capacity to receive greater responsibility. Ultimately, my goal as a dad is never to raise a child but an adult. My goal is to see somebody fully functioning in this world at the maximum ability that they have because of my influence in their life. That is what we do concerning leadership in small groups. Encourage every member of your small group to step into a level of leadership. The more responsibility that they have the greater context they have for growth and maturity. This is key to the process of leadership development.

Destiny

The fifth and final area of development is destiny. Help every member of your small group understand their purpose in life. Approach this just like a dad would towards their son or daughter. Ask them, "What do you want to be when you grow up? Let me help you get there". This is what you want to be for every member of your small group that is aspiring to leadership. Take them under your wing. Discuss with them where they have come from, where they believe they are going, and what their passions and dreams are. Then, you give them feedback. Share with them the course you believe they should set for their vision. Share with them the things they ought to accomplish in order to become what they dream of. Give them as much opportunity within the context of the home group to actually grow into that. And, then, if they grow into an assistant leadership position they are next in line, when a multiplication occurs, to lead the following group. If they lead the following group, multiply that new group and send out a new leader two or three times, in my definition they are qualified, at that point, to be a small group coach. And, in fact, they are qualified to be an elder in the church. They are overseeing the body by overseeing all those people.

15 Leadership Development: How to Develop Leaders

Concept

Small groups are the main leadership development tool where people are measured and developed in five main areas of leadership qualification; health, head, heart, hands, and help.

Intro

This session is about the “how” of leadership development. How do you raise up quality leaders? This section will discuss some other dimensions to raising up leaders.

A Leaders Primary Responsibility

Priority

The primary responsibility of every pastor is leadership development. You will never thrive as much as when you are developing leaders. Your church will never be as healthy as when new leaders are being raised up, activated and deployed. Your ability to impact your region and community depends on leadership development. Leadership development is one of your primary responsibilities. And, yet I’m surprised by how few pastors delegate time for this particular issue. I will sit with leaders and ask them, “How much time do you spend meeting with leaders and developing them?” Usually, it is 20% to 30%, although it should be around 70%. In other words, I believe that this is your primary job. If you balance in that direction you will have an amazing time. Here are some of the practical “how-to” steps of leadership development.

Two Primary Focuses

When I was pastoring a larger church of about 1,000 people, I spent my time doing two primary things: One, I had meetings with new people. And, two, I had meetings with leaders. I had very little time for the people in the middle, not because I did not care about them. I loved them. But, my two highest priorities were to connect with those coming our way and to raise up leaders that can care for everyone in the church. I am a firm believer in Ephesians 4:11 as my primary philosophy of ministry. God gave gifted people to the Church, not to do everybody’s job for them, but that they would impart to the Church and equip the Church to do the job. As a pastor, your main job is not to pastor every member. Your main job is to equip the members to pastor each other.

Yes and No

In order to equip the members of your church to pastor each other there has to be a shift in your church. In order for that to happen, you have to say “no” to certain things, and “yes” to other things. The average church in the United States has 60 to 80 members. Even though we have many mega-churches, most churches are capped-off at about 70 people because that is the maximum amount of people that a single pastor can get to know. When a pastor builds a church to about 70 people they find themselves overwhelmed with obligations towards those 70 people. You are needed for counseling, conversation, pastoring, etc. Part of the growth process that gets your church beyond 70 people is your ability to say “no” to people. You can say, “We have home groups at our church that are designed to be a place where the body cares for each other. You need to join a home group. And, I have decided that I cannot meet with people unless they are in an active home group and have already met with some of the leaders in the home group first.” This is simple. It can sound heartless, but, the fact is, you will not break the 70 barrier until you make those “yes” and “no” decisions. Your ability to delegate good leadership for people will make the difference. If they know they are being loved and cared for by somebody who knows

them more than you they will be happy to go to that person, rather than to you, for the kind of support and counsel that they need.

The 5-H's of Qualification

Let's look at a few areas that are crucial in the leadership development process. When I meet with a leader I want to be able to find out where they are at and how to move them forward. So, I have come up with five measuring points that are essential for a healthy leader.

The five measuring points, or the five H's of qualification, are:

1. Health
2. Head
3. Heart
4. Hands
5. Help

Health

The first measuring point is health. I have to know that anybody I am inviting into leadership is going to be relatively healthy. What do I mean by that? Can they balance a checkbook? Can they keep a job? Do they have a healthy marriage? Do they have a healthy lifestyle? I do not need them to have a six-pack stomach. But, I do need them to be healthy, sustainable, and powerful people. I am looking at the overall template of their health. Have they resolved their past? Have they forgiven those who have harmed them? I want to know if they have the basic ability to keep level and stable through life. I am looking for indicators of these traits. Some of those indicators will come out in a sideways conversation with the leader. But, some of those indicators should come from direct conversation with the leader.

Head

The second measuring point is head. Head is important. Does the leader have the biblical knowledge to lead where they are currently at and will they grow into the place I need them to grow into? Are they open to reading? Are they open to learning new things? Are they watching documentaries? Are they taking additional college courses? Are they in a growth mode in terms of their knowledge base? Because, ultimately, good learners are usually the best leaders. Therefore, I am looking for somebody who is a learner and is growing.

Heart

The third measuring point is the heart. I am looking for somebody who is working on themselves. Who is growing in terms of their character development. They are challenging areas of weakness, brokenness, addiction or problems. And, they are overcoming on incremental levels. I do not need perfection but I do need process. I do need somebody to be on a journey towards this goal. I need someone who is getting victory after victory even if there are a few failures along the way. I want people to grow into their fullness and that has to do with the heart. How do they relate to others and God? How do they relate to the circumstances around them? Are they able to walk through life in a healthy, buoyant, vibrant, joyful way and maintain good character in the process?

Hands

The fourth measuring point is hands. What is their skill base? At a basic helper level, such as a worship leader helper, someone does not need to have great skills at that moment. But, to be released as a worship leader they need better skills. I need to know that they know, at least, ten

to twenty songs by heart. That they can play all of the songs well. But, I will still not release them if they are a home group leader of worship. I would be reluctant to have them lead worship on a Sunday morning because that requires a whole new set of skills. There is a growth process of skill development that I am intent upon from my leaders.

The same process is applied to teachers. I might have somebody share a scripture at a home group but I would not necessarily have them give a full 15-minute teaching. I might have them share a teaching but not have them be a substitute for me on a Sunday morning. There is a skill development process. I want to be able to identify where somebody is currently at in the process. Next, I want to give them specific growth steps to become the preacher that I would be happy to substitute for me on a Sunday.

Help

The fifth and final measuring point is help. I want people to know how to get help when they need it. They can use google, take somebody aside or take the key leader aside. They can ask for a few minutes of time and talk about what they are struggling with or confused about, etc. I need people who know how to access the help they need to break through the barriers that might hinder them from becoming the leader that God has called them to be.

These five measuring points serve as a metric for me to be able to say, “At this basic level of leadership you are really qualified to lead as a helper. But, if you are going to be the main leader, I would like to see you grow in these areas. Then, we can articulate the growth that we are hoping for and expecting. And, we can provide structures and support systems for that growth to occur. It is not an arbitrary decision about who is doing what and how to delegate responsibility. Adopt this way of measuring people’s status quo and their movement towards the purposes of Christ.

So, as a leader, I encourage you to adopt a more comprehensive, intentional leadership development process. Make sure that this process is happening in your small groups. Small groups are the main leadership development incubator that you have as a church. And, as you develop leaders, make sure that they are also equipped with the specific way to lead others into fullness. So that, ultimately, God can be glorified in your church as every member achieves their highest good in Christ.

16 Multiplication: Multiplying Groups

Concept

God's strategy for extending His kingdom is to use self-reproducing families. This is what small groups provide like no other ministry does.

Intro

This particular series is designed to help you, first of all, understand the importance of small groups as a key aspect of Christ's delivery system of kingdom reality in your church. In other words, there are a million things that churches do to "do" church. We have large Sunday meetings, worship, children's church, youth groups, adult services, senior citizen's classes, etc. We have a million things. But, what are the most essential things? You have to gauge the most essential things by that which covers the most ground with the least amount of effort to produce the highest result that is unique to that meeting.

Most churches agree that Sunday mornings are our most important meetings. But, I would challenge that. I do not agree that the Sunday morning meeting is the primary meeting. In fact, I believe it is considered the primary meeting only because our culture says it is. But, is it where the highest percentage of kingdom reality happens? There has to be a context in which the main leader of the church speaks to the church and communicates vision, passion and movement forward. Every church needs to gather together in its larger tribe. But, if that is the only kind of church that you are doing then you are going to lack the quality of individual discipleship and leadership development that is necessary to fulfill the great commission.

We believe that every church is, first and foremost, a leadership incubator. A destiny incubator. Its purpose is to draw out the gifts of, and to mobilize, every, single member for service for the glory of God. Only when every member is mobilized, according to Ephesians 4:16, will the fullness of Christ be manifested on the earth. I believe that home groups could be more essential to that outcome than the main, large, public meeting. That is why we love small groups.

From the Inside Out

In these final sessions, we are addressing the issue of multiplying small groups. The strategy that I am presenting is one that builds from the inside out; like most living things. Most factories build from the outside in. They put in machines and important products. They fashion them, package them and send them out. Unfortunately, many small group ministries have become like a factory. I love looking at small group structure and theory all over the earth. There are a number of great, small group models that have operated all over the earth. I have sampled many of them and worked in the context of many of them. The concern I have is that some high-level, strong, small group ministries have erred a little bit by becoming so driven by goals. They are so driven by results that they end up making people the servant to the group rather than the group a servant to the people. Jesus said an amazing thing. He said, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." (Mark 2:27) The way the Pharisees were enforcing the Sabbath was to make it some great, big furnace that enslaved people were shoveling coal into all the time.

Fantasy Church

All the structures of God exist for the benefit of humanity. One of the things that I have realized is that much of church can be in the fantasy realm. John Wimber said, "Church is a lot like

playing basketball without a ball and without a hoop.” Therefore, we are going through a pantomime in church because we have no real measurements to use. We have no clear metrics by which we determine our relative success or failure in the context of doing what we call, “church”. I call this fantasy church. A lot of us, including myself, are guilty of living in fantasy church. Fantasy church is going through the motions of church without ever really getting anywhere. It is like spinning your wheels in the mud.

Factory Church

The next type of church, called “factory church”, is when a church is so ridged, disciplined, structured and, in a sense, manipulative that it will forcefully produce great outcomes. But, it is always producing from the outside in. Factory church is always forcing upon people a certain model or focus.

Family Church

There is an alternative to fantasy and factory church which I call “family church”. Family church is where we create family units that raise up sons and daughters into full adulthood in Christ. These people are not driven. The family exists for the sake of the individual not the individual existing for the family. The family is nothing other than the collection of individuals moving together for God’s purpose and to God’s glory. This is what you should envision your small groups becoming. But, in order for that to happen and for it to have its full, God-given effect, your small groups must multiply.

Self-Reproducing Families

When God created Adam and Eve in the garden, He gave them a prime directive with four points:

‘Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it...”’
(Gen 1:28)

1. Be fruitful
2. Multiply
3. Fill the earth
4. Subdue it

God’s strategy for populating the planet was to use self-reproducing families. That was also God’s original methodology for extending His kingdom. Unfortunately, sin entered the world and everything became messed up. But, God had a redemptive plan that began with Abraham and Sarah. Abraham and Sarah’s strategy was to adjust everything by following God together and creating a people that follow God. His methodology was what? It was family. He created a family. And, that family created family. Then, that family created 12 families. And, those 12 families became the fathers of the tribes of Israel. Ultimately, the 12 tribes became a nation. Jesus Himself was planted and birthed in that nation as God the son; manifested on earth in human form.

Raising Up Family

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave us the same, original commission concerning family. He said, “Go, and make families that make families.” (Matt. 28:19, paraphrase) In other words, He said, “Go and make disciples who make disciples.” (Matt.28:19, paraphrase)

We are in this amazing calling to be fruitful and to multiply. We are to build influence around the world by helping new people to be born again, join a family, be raised up as spiritual sons and

daughters, and, ultimately, move into spiritual adulthood. They can then begin their own families; raising up their sons and daughters into Christ. This is God's plan, purpose, methodology and, ultimately, our destiny. Small groups are God's way of doing that. Small groups provide smaller family units. My wife and I had seven children at the peak of our family. It was a big family. We would go on vacation and make 30 meals a day. The point is that family is work. It is cuddling up on the couch, going to Disney land, and taking a vacation. But, it is also work.

At the end of the day, my goal is not to make my son only feel my love. My goal is to make sure that by the time he leaves my house he is ready for the real world. And, that is my goal in terms of everything that we are multiplying in the kingdom. You can use small groups as a training vehicle for that development. Your small groups will multiply and create new small groups. The multiplication process of new families led by new adults who are doing kingdom work for the glory of God will bring transformation to your church and your entire region.

17 Multiplication: What Is It?

Concept

All living things reproduce. Small groups facilitate the multiplication of believers, ministers, marketplace ministers, ministries, churches, marketplace-small groups and small groups themselves.

Intro

In this particular session, I want to address the “what” of small group multiplication.

All Living Things Multiply

Everything that God touches multiplies. In fact, all living things multiply. There are five dimensions of life that are measurable within the smallest cell or the biggest animal. Those five dimensions are:

1. They grow.
2. They consume resource.
3. They dispose of waste.
4. They interact with their environment.
5. They reproduce.

Everything that lives reproduces. So, it is important for us, as we build thriving, living, small groups, that we have a plan for reproduction.

Conversion Growth

First of all, our goal in the kingdom, as those who are called to make disciples, is to reproduce. We want to reproduce converts. We want to reproduce believers. We want conversion growth. Because, ultimately, if we are not reaching the lost then everything shuts down anyway. Those who do not yet know Christ are the main reason we are still on this planet. Every priority of the kingdom could be accomplished better in heaven than on earth except one thing; reaching the unreached for Christ. We need to understand that. As pastors, we need to begin to find a working model for reaching the lost. That is where true regional transformation occurs. A recent statistic shows that in the vast majority of counties in the United States, not one of them has had churches grow by conversion growth at a greater amount than population growth. In other words, we are not even barely keeping up with population growth in terms of our ability to win souls for the Lord. That needs to change. That is a scandal that needs to be eradicated. This requires each pastor to dig deeper and ask the Lord, “How can we make a difference?” Small groups carry some of the wisdom concerning being a solution and an answer to that question.

Multiplying Ministers

In Second Timothy 2:2, Paul speaks to Timothy and says, “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” There is a four-generational reality at work in this verse. We have:

1. Paul
2. Timothy
3. Faithful men
4. Others

All of these ministers are reproducing themselves into other ministers. Paul multiplied himself into Timothy. Timothy multiplied himself into faithful men. And, the faithful men multiplied themselves into others. We could go on assuming that the others multiplied themselves into others also. Our goal is to reproduce through conversion growth and through ministers who multiply themselves into others.

Multiplying Ministries

Next, we want to reproduce ministries. Build into your small groups the probability of reproduction. Every small group is supposed to multiply. Preferably, you want to build a small group ministry and maintain a 60% to 70% self-multiplication rate. Let me describe this for a moment because it takes some definition:

During the peak of our church we had 70 small groups. 42 small groups were generic, pastoral groups. We also had a number of specialty groups beyond that. *Out of the 42 small groups, about 35 of them were birthed out of an existing group as a multiplied expression.* We always had the need for new groups because there were always new leaders being raised up in our midst. Sometimes a new assistant leader, coming up under an existing key leader, was not able to help build their current small group to the place of being able to multiply. Sometimes the assistant leader was stuck. They would keep hitting the ceiling of the existing key leader. I wanted to give the assistant leader an opportunity to step out and start their own group, independent of their key leader, if multiplication was not an option within a reasonable period of time. You can keep your self-multiplication rate high if you multiply groups organically and through independent small group plants.

Multiplying Churches

We have to multiply churches if we want to see transformation. We need new, dynamic churches that are able to affect the world around us.

Multiplying Ministers in The Marketplace

We need to multiply ministers for the marketplace. Just keeping people in the Church, serving the Church, is not the highest use of their skills in the kingdom. It is not the highest purpose of their destiny in the kingdom. The majority of those in your church are called to bring kingdom impact, not primarily within your church, but, outside of your church. When you have a vision for multiplication you want to make sure that you are thinking these kinds of things: "How do I multiply into the retail industry? How do I multiply into manufacturing? How do I multiply into civil government? How do I multiply into entertainment and the cultural world? How do I multiply into these areas?"

You have the power and the people to be able to impact the marketplace. As the people in your church pursue their dreams they will also transform the world around them. All of these aspects are crucial. You are a multiplier-catalyst. You are the one who is helping everybody to give birth to new things so that new things will come.

Impart the Vision for Small Groups

Concerning small groups, be specific about your expectations. When you release a new small group, celebrate that accomplishment in front of the church. Take that time to talk about multiplication. What does it mean? It is not for your glory. It is for the glory of God. It is not for your purposes or to build your church. It is for the extension of the kingdom. It is for God to be manifested in unique, different and diverse ways throughout different neighborhoods. Multiplication is intrinsic to the very heart of God.

Small Groups as a Strategy

It is time for you to develop a strategy in your church for reaching the lost, multiplying conversion growth, reaching ministers in your church and multiplying them unto multiplying ministries. I do not believe there is a finer tool for accomplishing those three primary purposes but a small group; even for planting and multiplying new churches. All new churches should start as small groups because it is the cell, the micro-church and the church in its microcosm. We planted over a dozen churches around our region and the nation. And, we did it through small groups. First, we would plant a small group. Then that small group would grow and multiply and grow and multiply, etc. By the time we had three or four small groups, we had a solid core to be able to plant a larger, public expression. So, do not hesitate to start building small groups.

Marketplace Small Groups

Small groups facilitate marketplace ministry. You will multiply small groups into the marketplace. You will have a government group, an industry group, a CEO group, an entertainment group, etc. Because, the nature of things is that small groups diversify as they grow.

Think multiplication. Allow yourself to envision a multiplying church. The more you multiply the cells of your body, the larger your body becomes. The growth that you are desiring is found in the multiplication of small groups. The new leaders your desiring are found in the multiplication of small groups. The volunteers you are longing for are found in the multiplication of small groups. Small groups, when they are done right, can be the answer to most of the challenges of a local church. If you have done small groups before and you are disillusioned, I encourage you, step back into it. God has a plan to multiply you into the lives of every member in your church. He can do this by the development of healthy, small groups that will call out the gifts and calling in people's lives and help them to fulfill God's purposes for them.

18 Multiplication: How to Multiply

Concept

The process of building a small group is modeling a small group, having quality meetings and infrastructure, developing leaders, multiplying the groups, slowly releasing key leadership and instituting coaches.

Intro

How do you build self-multiplying, small groups that will produce the results you are anticipating in your church? This really begins with you, pastor. You are the one who can make the difference as you envision what kinds of groups you want to form. Our strategy is one that is consistent with a multiplication vision.

The Process of Building a Small Group

You will adopt a strategy, build a plan, gather a team, and begin to model what you are hoping to replicate into the church.

Pilot Model

Next, you will have small group for 12 to 26 weeks with a team of leaders. Initially, have that group be closed. This group consists of your key leaders. They are the ones that you, eventually, want to multiply out as home group leaders. 12 weeks, or so, into the small group meetings, open up the group for others. For the next 6 to 12 weeks, gather in new people. At this point, you are actually experiencing a real home group. You did it first as a closed group; to create your style, flavor, format and focus. But, now you welcome people in and start the process of officially doing small groups.

Quality and Infrastructure

Here is the process of “doing” a small group:

1. You have great meetings. And, that is by the Apostle’s doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread and prayers. Have rich times in the presence, pray for one another, minister to one another, and share your hearts with one another; all the aspects we have talked about throughout these sessions. Having a great meeting is crucial.
2. At the same time as having a great meeting, you want to be focused on building infrastructure. That begins with your core team operating in their different job descriptions. Have at least three of the following job descriptions in each group. Although, I recommend having all five. The five job descriptions are:

Job Descriptions

Pastor

You have the pastor or the pastoral role. They are ones doing the host work. They are the pastor of the group. They build community. They keep people connected, follow up on people who did not come, remember birthdays, etc.

Teacher

You have the teacher or the teaching role. They are the disciple-maker. They are the ones who take a new believer or somebody new to the group and will bring them up to speed. Therefore, the new person feels like they are actually a full-participating part of the group.

Evangelist

You have the evangelist or the evangelistic role. This is somebody who is focused on reaching the lost. They may organize a periodic outreach for the group, but a lot of their work is done with individuals. They help people reach their friends for Christ. They coach and counsel people concerning evangelism. They share publicly in the meeting a couple of times a month or even every week. They share a scripture about reaching the lost and instruct others how to do it. Then, they lead prayer.

Prophet

You have the prophet or the prophetic role. This person will be the worship leader. This is somebody who is focused on bringing the presence and power of God into the group. Ideally, they will be a musician but they do not have to be. They can just be a deejay of a couple of good songs to focus people towards the Lord.

Apostle

You have the apostle or the apostolic role. This is the main leader. This is the person who has the vision for that particular group at that particular time.

All of these five functions will create a core group of five people, not including spouses. You will start small groups with this good, healthy core to begin with. You will know each other, love each other and will have been trained together.

Recruiting and Training

Your leaders first job is not to do their specific job, although that is important. Their first, real, primary job is to recruit somebody else. After that initial, closed group period have your leaders start recruiting an assistant host, assistant worship leader, assistant outreach worker, etc. Have them personally train an assistant within the context of the small group meetings themselves. For example, the leaders can meet with their assistants for ten minutes before the meeting. The leader can then train the assistant to do what they are doing. In a few weeks, the assistant will be able to do what they learned in the place of the leader during the meeting.

Build people at the most basic, entry level of involvement towards leadership development. Initially, people will not receive great leadership responsibility. They will just take a little step. But, that little step turns into another step. And, that step turns into another step and so on. Pretty soon, the person who is an assistant worship leader becomes a worship leader of the next, second group. After the third multiplication, they become the primary worship leader who disciple's others. Then, they may move into a place of being the assistant leader over the whole group. And, then, ultimately, they become the next candidate for leading a small group once that group multiplies.

Multiply and Lead Two Groups

Let's say, as the key pastor, you did not have small groups in your church. You adopted this vision. You have met with your team. You have done the planning. You have actually begun that closed group and you are now beginning to gather in more people. Your small group is growing. You are starting to experience that sense of success. You feel that it is happening! Your leaders are all raising up other leaders in an informal, organic, relational, fun dynamic. You are all

experiencing the presence and the power of God together. When you get to a place where you have 15 to 20 people in the small group, it is time to multiply. What do you do?

If you do not have any other small groups, and you started the first group yourself, only multiply into two small groups. You may have all your leaders in one small group. All of them may be capable leaders. Although that may be true, you want to keep your small groups dense, condensed and focused. Because, that is where the power is going to be.

Start a Third Group and Rotate

If you can handle it, start a third small group. Initially, be the coach of all three groups. Be in two of the groups per week. Rotate through the groups. The reason for this is so that you can take some time off for your family. Remember, at this point you are leading one small group and two, different, key leaders are leading the other two small groups. In light of this, nurturing those two leaders in the other two small groups will be crucial to their effectiveness and success concerning their leadership process and the next step of multiplying their group. So, meet back and forth between those two small groups.

Multiply Again

Then you may start another small group. But, start missing one of the groups so that they have to lead in your absence the week that you are not there. Do a very careful stepping back from your leadership.

Small Groups Coach

Now you have three small groups going. By this time, one of your key leaders may demonstrate the ability to be a small groups coach. So, start working with that person and help them to move through the small groups coaching them. They can then step out of direct leadership and raise up their assistant to take over their small group. Although, they are coaching the multiplication of those three small groups in a powerful way.

The Replication Process

The more you build this small group process, the more you will be able to multiply groups.

Let's look at the statistics of multiplication. Let's say you are multiplying at a 60% rate and you have ten groups. In other words, six of the ten small groups multiply. After that multiplication, guess what? You have 16 groups. Let's say you have those 16 groups and you are still at a 50% multiplication rate. At the very next multiplication time, eight of them do not multiply, but eight of them do. You now have 24 groups in your church! By that time everybody in your church is in a small group! Everybody is in a developmental process! Even beyond that, your members are starting to reach out to their friends, who are not a part of your church, to bring them into this amazing culture. They are bringing them in so that they can also be developed into their gifts and calling in Christ in order to become the people God has called them to be. The net result is that there is growth in terms of multiplication of conversions. There is growth in terms of multiplication of ministers. There is growth in terms of multiplication of ministries. And, ultimately, there is growth in your church as well.

This dynamic has worked in many different nations in slightly different ways. Our format is unique. If you apply yourself, you will find the amazing power of the life of Christ regenerative in your people and taking over. You will find the replication of culture, values and priorities. Heartfelt kingdom passion in the hearts of your people will continue to grow. Every member that grows will be fulfilled in Christ at a level they have not known before. And, ultimately, they will be able to accomplish what God has for them.

Avoid Burnout

Finally, always allow people to step back when they need to. I do not like burnout. I think that burnout is a curse. As you build this, make sure that you are sensitive. Make sure you have good coaching at no more than a one to five ratio. You want your coaches to be aware, visiting the groups, and getting feedback from group members. This will help you to monitor, support and encourage the leaders in a way that reduces the incidents of burnout and produces the growth, delight, power and passion that you are longing for.

So, God bless you as you engage in this process. And, may the Lord be with you as you multiply ministers for His kingdom using small groups.

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