

# **Five Keys to Small Groups that Multiply**

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PASTOR'S COACH  
MINISTRY ESSENTIALS



*Five Keys to Small Groups that Multiply - Pastor's Coach Ministry Essentials*  
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# Introduction

Healthy things grow – both in quality and quantity. We believe healthy small groups are a vital part of any church. Our model of small groups is not the only one - there are many ways of doing small groups. But what we've found is that unless small groups move from a pastoral emphasis of feeding and caring to an apostolic emphasis of training and sending, they tend to become self-centered and go nowhere, or they fizzle out. Such groups can be the foundation of authentic community AND a vehicle for discipleship, leadership development and evangelism.

This e-book is actually one chapter from a longer book on Small Groups. It gives some primary keys or basic steps to launching powerful and healthy small groups that multiply. We will talk about the “how-to” of small groups: Where to start and how to build small groups practically with a stated goal of multiplying the groups.

## 1. Clarify Your Culture

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

### Vision

Your vision will determine where the 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 his or her 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 could they connect? 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. If you can get 60% or 70% of your membership in small groups, you are off to a great start. However, 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.

## **2. Create a Plan with Your Primary Leadership Team**

### **Determine your Goals**

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.

### **Build Consensus with your Team**

Think linear and conceptually about this. Ask yourself, “How can we build this?” Draw on your team for this and 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 be lots of input but in the end, there can only be one blueprint in the house. That blueprint can be modified along the way, but you have to have a single unified blueprint to work from, otherwise a door might be installed in the middle of the living room... 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.

## **3. Model the Ministry You Hope to Multiply**

### **First You Have to Live it**

Once you have your plan in place, 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 in 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.

### **Get Help if Needed**

If you haven't had the experience of doing this before, first of all, don't feel bad. Most pastors inherit ministries and churches from others and often have not been taught how to multiply leaders and groups. Find someone who can help you. Bring in people to coach and model. Go visit groups and churches that are doing it. At Pastor's Coach, we have many resources that can help you, as well as in depth one on one coaching to guide you.

## **4. Develop a Self-Replicating Leadership Team**

### **Start with One Group**

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 from the inside out. Build your first small group in the leadership core and multiply it out from there.

### **Spend Quality Time Getting It Right with the First Group**

You have to spend time to make sure that your leadership core has fully internalized the culture you want. If your core leaders don't have the same vision, values, passion, sense of mission, and commitment, your members won't.

## **5. Multiply Your Pilot Small Group**

### **Be Intentional about Multiplying**

Plan to multiply in 12-18 months. 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.

### **Build with a High Percentage of your Core Leaders First**

You want the percentage of leaders high in the first groups because as they multiply there will be a greater percentage of new people who will need to receive and internalize the culture. You want the first groups to be really strong and able to reproduce. It's better to have one big group at first, and then multiply to two or three and make sure they are powerful and viable, rather than to multiply to six or eight right away and have half of them fizzle.

### **Have a Plan**

Make sure that for 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.

## **Celebrate and Support the People Who Are Doing It**

Have leaders and members from the groups give testimonies. Do videos of the groups. Spend extra time with them. Show everyone that this is a top priority for you. Interview group members on Sunday morning. Do a small group fair to promote them. Spend time training the leaders and supporting them.

## **Conclusion**

Small groups take work. But this is where authentic community and discipleship come together so people can fulfill the one another Scriptures AND the great commission.

Finally, you can have thriving groups that multiply, but such an effort starts with the senior leader and is transmitted from the inside out. Being intentional is half the battle. Ask and trust Holy Spirit to enable your church to function as the Body of Jesus!



# Resources

## Longer Version of this e-Book

The complete version of the book of which this is just one chapter will be available on the Pastor's Coach website.

## Pastor's Coach

See [www.pastorscoach.com](http://www.pastorscoach.com) or contact Glen Reed at 916-467-9934, or email us at [info@pastorscoach.com](mailto:info@pastorscoach.com).

## Training

Check out our *Destiny Incubators: A Powerful Approach to Small Groups* MasterClass.

<https://pastorscoach.com/destiny-incubator-masterclass/>

It includes:

- Four weekly one-hour Group Coaching Calls.
- Video Course with 18- 10-minute videos by Pastor's Coach founder Michael Brodeur.
- Course notes and application material.

See <https://pastorscoach.com/videos/>.

## Membership Options

All MasterClasses and the How to Develop Small Groups that Multiply Video Course are included free for Pro and Max members.

We have many resources, including courses, MasterClasses, assessments and coaching available to our members. Consider joining; check out membership options at: <https://pastorscoach.com/join/>.

## Coaching

We specialize in personal coaching for all aspects of ministry and leadership, by phone, Skype or in person. See <https://pastorscoach.com/coaching/>, or contact Glen Reed at 916-467-9934, or email us at [info@pastorscoach.com](mailto:info@pastorscoach.com).

## Destiny Finder

See [www.destinyfinder.com](http://www.destinyfinder.com), or contact Glen Reed at 916-467-9934, or email us at [info@pastorscoach.com](mailto:info@pastorscoach.com).

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