SOUTH NORFOLK
CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Exalting Christ Together

Small Group Training

Session 2 HANDOUT

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Class Schedule

Session 1 – What's a Community Group and Why are We Doing Them?

Session 2 – The Job of a Community Group Shepherd

Session 3 – Preparing Community Group Discussions

Community Group Leadership Training Seminar Assignments

1) **Pray for 1 hour about your role as a shepherd.**
    - Take an hour and get away to pray about what it means to shepherd and lead God's people.
    - Allow the weight of the responsibility to force you to your knees in dependence; likewise allow the joy of shepherding to overwhelm your heart with thankfulness for what God is allowing you to do.
    - Journal some thoughts about what God is teaching you.
    - To be completed after session two.

2) **Philosophy of Your Small Group**
    - Write a 1–2 page paper explaining a biblical philosophy of small groups.
    - The goal of this assignment is to help you process the material in your mind and give you a reference guide to refer back to when leading a small group.
    - To be completed at the end of the seminar.

3) **Study Notes and Teaching Outline**
    - Prepare a small group discussion/lesson.
    - Turn in your study notes and lesson plan.
    - This assignment will help give you a sense of what it takes to prepare a small group discussion.
    - To be completed after session three.

Community Groups and the Shepherding Heart of God

I) Introduction:

Last week, we covered the *overarching* purpose of a community group ministry. Its important we understand this. We must have a *biblical philosophy* to be effective.

The two goals of community groups:

- _____

- _____

Ultimately, we need to remember that community groups are *not* about meeting **our** needs, but learning to minister and use our gifts in a more personal and relational setting.

Small groups enhance the benefits of _____.

- We can have fellowship in the corporate gathering, but enjoy it much more richly when we build relationships

Small groups provide opportunities to _____ the _____.

- Many of these commands are impossible in _____ _____ _____*and* _____ meetings.

What is the purpose?

Small groups are a chosen application to obey biblical commands that cannot be easily accomplished in the larger context of the local church. They provide an extension of pastoral care, deeper accountability, more intimate fellowship and give opportunity for believers to utilize their gifts to serve the Body of Christ.

Elements:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

The Role of Community Group Leaders

Community groups extend _____ *care.* That means community group leaders *need to see themselves primarily as* _____.

Leadership is knowing God's heart for God's people and taking the initiative to get them there by God's means and God's power

Biblical Characteristics of leaders:

- _____ (1 Pet 5:5)
- _____ to _____ (1 Tim 4:7)
- _____ (Eph 6:21)
- _____ (Phil 2:17)
- _____ of the _____ (2 Tim 2:15)

Our view of leadership in any capacity should be based on ***God's*** *design, and not the world. Leadership should:*

1. *Understand* _____ *Design for His People*
2. *Be an* _____
3. *Take* _____
4. *Demonstrate* _____ _____
5. _____ *in Christ*
6. _____ *in Christ*

II) The Heart of a Shepherd

God loves His people, and He has chosen to work _____ _____ _____ to care for His people and help them mature (The NT clearly depicts God's design for the spiritual care of His people is His church). Community groups, as a part of the local church, can help provide spiritual care for believers.

At the core of any Community group is ***God's heart towards people.*** Understanding God's heart towards people lays the foundation for leadership ***and*** faithful participation in any small group. Leadership seeks to *adopt God's heart in ministering to people.*

Question: ***How does understanding God's heart towards people lay the foundation for faithful participation?***

Leaders need to recognize the great privilege and responsibility God has given us. They need to take their job seriously recognizing they are dealing with souls. This should be a joy to their hearts as they depend upon the Lord to work through them.

- The Shepherding Heart of God
  - –Ps 23: What God does as a shepherd
  - How has God shepherded you?
  - How has He shown you care and guided you?
- Jesus is our Shepherd, and He is the example of the perfect shepherd.
  - –Jn 10:11–18
- Under–shepherds **follow His example**, seeking to care for people as He does.

The goal of church leadership is *the* _____ *and* _____ *of* _____.

"The more a leader invests his life in people, the more effective that person will be in the Lord's service."

–John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership*

"People, not programs, were on Paul's mind as he came to the end of his life. People are the most vital resource any leader can cultivate."

–John MacArthur, *The Book on Leadership*

GOAL: To _____ for _____ *with* _____*'s* _____.

A) **The Ministry of a Shepherd**

1. **The Shepherd** _____ _____ **His Sheep**

    - Heb 13:17

    - Ezek 34:6,12,13

    - Paul's example:

"He watches that his sheep do not wander away. He watches to make sure that they get everything they need to eat and drink. He watches the weather in case they will need shelter. He

watches for enemies to prevent any attack. Shepherding involves constant watchfulness. Otherwise, the sheep get lost or hurt." –Philip Ryken, *City on a Hill*

Practically:

–Get to _____ the people in your small group.

–Know how they spend their _____ and who they spend their _____ with.

–Pay _____ to what is going on in their lives.

–Watch how they _____ to different _____.

–Others?

Note:

The shepherd is NOT a _____ _____!

Another note:

We should _____ be _____ _____ one another.

2. **The Shepherd _____ His Sheep**

Sheep are very difficult to make rest. They are jittery animals that are constantly anxious. If one sheep is upset or spooked, the other sheep tend to follow. We are similar to this. We can get worked up easy, so a part of the job of a shepherd is to give the sheep rest.

Sheep need to be free from _____

Sheep need to be free from _____

Sheep need to be free from _____ _____

Sheep need to drink from _____ _____

- Ps 23:2–3

- Ezek 34:12,13,16

- Ezek 34:15

- 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1

Practically:

- People will learn from the example of the shepherd
- Shepherds need to have a vision for where they would like the group to be and for where they would like the individuals to be
- Shepherds need to learn how to *take them there,* not just tell them.

Examples:

- How to study the Bible
- how to pray
- evangelism
- service projects
- others?

3. **The Shepherd _____ His Sheep**

- Ps 23:3–4

- Ezek 34:12

Practically:

- Know the _____ and _____ in your people's lives (doctrine, friends, temptations, school, work, events, money, etc.).

A good place to start in discerning these dangers is by _____.

Another consideration is to pay attention to _____.

- Protect them from wolves.

What _____ *do they seem to be prone to* _____*?*

- Teach them to be rooted in the truth.

4. **The Shepherd _____ His Sheep**

- Ps 23:1–2

- Ezek 34:14

Practically:

- Give them _____ they can _____.

- Teach them, also, to _____ _____.

5. **The Shepherd _____ His Sheep**

- Ps 23 (context of entire psalm)

- Jn 10:15

- Jn 15:13

- 1 Jn 4:9

Practically:

- Love is our motivation in shepherding. If we do not shepherd with love, then we have missed the heart of God in shepherding.

- Tell your people you love them.

- Find ways to express care for them.

Ultimately, the quality of our _____ will depend on how well we understand the way we're _____ by _____.

B) **The Responsibility of a Shepherd**

"It doesn't matter what capacity of leadership you are in; formal or informal; leading a small group or discipling your own family. If you are *ministering* to other people, you should feel a sobering responsibility that recognizes *these are God's people and He loves them."*

 Hebrews 13:17

 Ezekiel 34

The Dependence of a Shepherd

You are dependent upon God.

–Jn 15:5

"I am the vine and you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do *nothing."*

It is only as a spiritual leader depends upon God that he is empowered to be a tool in God's hand. Apart from Christ we can bear no fruit!

God _____ all _____.

- 1 Cor 3:7

You are God's _____ _____ to use for _____ _____.

–1 Cor 3:5–9

–Eph 2:10

–1 Cor 4:1–2

–2 Cor 13:4

Enjoy watching God work!
3 John 4-

I have no greater joy than this, then to hear that my children are walking in the truth

Assessing & Praying for the Community Group

I) Assessing the Maturity of a Community Group:

"Ministers therefore, must be observant of the case of their flocks, that they may know what is most necessary for them, both for matter, and for manner, and usually the matter is first to be regarded, as being of more importance than the manner."

–Richard Baxter, *The Reformed Pastor*

In order to effectively shepherd a community group, they need to be known. Each person and each group has different needs. The Shepherd's responsibility is to assess the needs of those they are ministering to in order to most effectively lead them.

- 1 Cor 3:1–2

  "And I brethren could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed even now you are not able…"

Side Note:

- Isn't this judging them?

- Be patient—this takes time!

A) **How to Assess the Maturity of a Community Group:**

A) Pray for God's Wisdom

a. Paul's Example

–Paul constantly prayed for his people.

b. Daniel's Example

–Dan 9:3

c. James' encouragement

–Jas 1:5

B) Search the Scriptures for God's Standard

a. 1 Jn 5:13

b. Heb 4:12

c. Ps 119

B) Practical Questions to Ask about Your Group:

1) Do they _____ the _____?

2) What do they _____ _____ in their _____?

3) What are their _____ _____?

4) What are they _____ in their _____ _____?

5) What are they _____ their _____ _____ doing?

6) How do they _____around people and what do they _____ about?

7) Be aware of background issues:

- Parents, siblings
- Environment
- Church history and involvement
- Activities involved in

8) How _____ are they?

9) Do they _____ God's Word and _____ what it says?

10) Do they express a _____ _____ to _____ God?

11) How _____ are they? _____? _____?

12) Others?

C) Practical Help for Knowing Your Sheep:

1) Spend _____ with them.

2) Do _____ they _____ to do.

3) Don't _____ _____ from asking _____ _____.

4) Be _____.

5) Be _____ about your _____.

6) _____ with them individually.

7) _____ a _____ _____.

II) Praying for the Community Group:

"Epaphras greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers."
–Col 4:12

Your greatest responsibility is also your greatest need! You must pray for those in your community group. Prayer reflects an attitude of the heart, dependence upon God. There is no greater leadership you can provide to the community group than to pray for them. God is the one who changes all hearts and causes all growth (1 Cor 3:7). Therefore, we need to humbly go before Him in prayer asking that He would grant wisdom and grace to do our job and that He would work in the lives of those in the group.

"The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous."
–Proverbs 15:29

"Loving leadership is incomplete without intercessory prayer."
–Alexander Strauch, *Leading with Love*

"The spiritual leader should outpace the rest of the church, above all in prayer."
–J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership*

A) **The Content of Prayer**

While there are many things we can and should pray about, the Lord has revealed the priorities of His heart in the pages of Scripture. He has given us both instruction and examples pertaining to the content of our prayers.

 Pray _____ Prayers

- Pray for them to _____ _____.
  –Eph 1:15–23

- Pray for them to be _____ up to all the _____ of _____.
  –Eph 3:14–19

- Pray for them to _____ a _____ _____ of their _____.
  –Col 1:9–12

- Pray for them to be _____ and _____ in every good work and word.
  –2 Thess 2:16–17

- Other Model Prayers.
  –Dan 9
  –Mat 6:7–14

 Pray with _____.

We get so consumed with all that *needs* to be done, that sometimes we forget to stop and enjoy all that God has *already* done.

- Eph 1:15–16

- Phil 1:3–5

- 1 Thess 1:2–10

B) **The _____ behind Prayer**

- Pray with _____
  - Jn 14:13–14
  - Jn 15:7,16
  - Eph 3:20–21
- Pray _____ and _____
  - Col 1:3
  - Col 1:9
  - 1 Thess 3:10
  - 1 Thess 5:17
- Pray with _____
  - 2 Tim 1:3–5

C) **The Work of Prayer**

- Schedule time.
- Make a prayer list.
- Pray specifically for members in your small group.

 Get together to pray with them and for them.

 Pray for different people different days.

 Pray that your heart would be transformed in prayer for your group