

Trios Program Guide

Pastors and their wives experiencing God's extravagant love in such a way that they are free to live authentic, vulnerable, grace-filled lives resulting in; healthy souls, healthy marriages, healthy families and a healthy church.

Trios are created to be a place to experience grace filled community. A place to be known, accepted, supported and developed. This community is vital! Without community that allows the whole person to develop in transparency and vulnerability, secrecy and sickness are not far behind. We need a safe setting in which we can be open, expressing our struggles and sins, a place of non-judgmental unconditional loving grace. Then and only then can we risk addressing the areas of our lives in need of repentance and growth. We all need intentional relationships where the focus is being real and supporting each other in growing in dependence on Jesus. We experience grace when we come to depend on God and each other to receive what we cannot do for ourselves.

These gender-based groups of three invite us to an intentional pursuit of walking with Jesus that embrace four practices as you meet together on a weekly basis.

Four distinctive values to grow in spiritual maturity:

1. Prayer
2. Application of the scriptures
3. Common Confession of sin through accountability
4. Growing in mutual mentoring

Praying together

The group begins in prayer with members praying through the outline of the Lord's Prayer. This sets the tone in looking to Jesus who is there in our midst, praying together as He instructed His followers to do. Praying through the Lord's Prayer together will encourage you in using the Prayer Outline in developing a personal life of prayer. In giving the template of the Lord's Prayer, Jesus provided the arenas of life that are essential for us to pray through on a regular basis to depend on God and experience the life He desires for us. In the use of plural pronouns we can see the Lord's Prayer is meant to be prayed in community as well as individually. As I pray about my life before you and you before me, we will learn how we can pray for each other.

(See appendix 1 prayer)

Applying God's Word

Applying God's Word is all about moving from seeing scripture as hearing about God to hearing from God. The need of every believer in developing our dedication to God is the renewing of our mind. Matthew 4:1-10, Romans 12:1-2 The purpose of S.O.A.P. is to help us move from being a hearer of the word to a doer of the word by providing a process by which we meditate on the Word in order to understand apply it. James 1:21-25 Our life is strengthened and becomes secure as we know the word and apply it to our life. Matthew 7:24-27 It is through the life changing presence of Christ that we are changed. Galatians 2:20 Journaling is an excellent way to process what God is saying to you. Recording makes it tangible and promotes accountability for the truth God is speaking to you. Each group member shares his or her Bible reading plan or practice to be accountable too on a daily and weekly basis. (If you feel more comfortable listen to the Word daily on your MP3. Just getting started try reading three chapters a day with a daily soap application. Reading multiple times through a book in this way provides context and saturation for renewing your mind.) Members come with their journal and share a S.O.A.P. exercise from one of their days in the word. The S.O.A.P. model is a great tool to help us grow to be in the Word and hear from God.

(See appendix 2 for the S.O.A.P model)

Scripture
Observation
Application
Prayer

Mutual Confession through Accountability Questions

Using the accountability questions group members come prepared to reflect on their walk with Christ that week. Honesty and humility are essential to growth so the group must be a safe place to share ones' struggles and failures. Each person takes turns answering the same questions and confessing to the group where they have fallen that week. Using these questions allow us to confess our sins to one another without feeling like we are intruding into personal areas or being the "sin police." But be careful to not fall into the habit of just confessing. Grace looks outside oneself and relies on the group during the week by reaching out and calling each other in times of struggle. Grace is looking outside ourselves to receive what I need in order to experience growth and success. Create a culture of running to grace not only through meeting together but calling one another during our struggles. James 5:16

To have spiritual, mental and emotional health we need confidants with which we can practice the mutual discipline of confession. The most fundamental issue is to uncover the lies from which these behaviors grow or originate. The accountability questions are an opportunity to continue to bring our life into the light and avoid the scams and schemes of the evil one. We come to our accountability time with successes and failures but in the light of God's continued grace. Love brings a dignity and grace to people as we identify with the realities of the sin and brokenness in our lives. But breaking through the denial in our lives can be difficult as our rationalizations are usually well layered. Inviting our spouse to join us in the process can be of great value in coming to face our reality and receive the support we need to overcome patterns of sin.

(See appendix 3 Accountability questions)

When the group has met for a period of time and is experiencing the four practices of Trios married participants are then encouraged to take the survey with their spouse to identify potential growth areas and share this with your Trio members.

(Appendix 6 Self-evaluation of Relational Health.)

Mutual Mentoring

The GROW practice is a simple flexible structure of mutual mentoring for intentional living. The mentoring process helps move growth from the wishful to the deliberate. Each meeting group members cycle through one of these roles in using the GROW acronym: a) the mentor, b) the mentored, and c) the observer.

Goal: What behavior or practice do I want to change or develop in my life?

Reality: What is my PRESENT situation?

Options: What options could I engage to help me change/grow?

Work Plan: What options I choose to become accountable to?

When it is my turn to be mentored the GROW process helps move me from wanting to change to willing to change.
(See appendix 4 G.R.O.W. model)

The above four values are a process God can use to fill in the GAPS of our lives through...

GROWing (Goals/Realities/Options/Work plan)

Accountability

Prayer

Studying God's Word (Soap)

Trio Group Meetings

Being in community is joining a group of people who know they need Jesus and people to change by receiving from others what we cannot achieve on our own. A Trio Group is 2 or 3 people (preferably three) who look to Jesus to change their lives from the inside out. Men meet with men and women with women. When more than 3 people are part of the group it should move into 2 groups of 2 because it's all about making room to help others be ALL IN.

A Growth Group model could be followed where for three weeks of the month Trios meet. The fourth Growth Group meeting Trios would not meet but the Home Team would meet all together for a potluck and a monthly celebration sharing the life change-taking place in their lives through Trios. In a two-hour Home group members would connect together for the first 15 minutes and then break out into Trios. After Trios the group could spend 15 minutes socializing together.

Here's what a Trio Group does:

- Three people in each group.
- Men meet with men and women with women.
- Uses the Bible to grow in knowing Jesus by reading it all week long.
- Makes sure that all members of the group are equal. No leader needed. Rotate leadership of the group each week.
- Practice grace looking to God and others for what we cannot provide for ourselves.
- Meets each week for about 90 minutes.
 - Trio 90-Minute Community
 - Lord's Prayer 10-20 Min
 - S.O.A.P. 15-20 Min
 - Accountability 25-35 Min
 - G.R.O.W. 25-35 Min

Community

- 1) Life change happens in relationship with others. We need each other to grow. Grace runs to relationship with God and others. (Proverbs 27:17)

Accountability

- 2) We need people to help us to follow the way of life. We do not grow because of "willpower" or "self-effort", but because of God's provision in Himself and others. (Philippians 2:12-13, Hebrews 3:12-15)

Confidentiality

- 3) We tell our sins to others in our group. Members will not tell other people about what you've done, but will help you to follow after Jesus. (James 5:16)

Flexibility

- 4) In Trios we can meet anywhere and anytime. And Jesus meets with us! (Matthew 18:20)

Multiply

- 5) People are attracted to acceptance, grace and freedom. Find others who want to do life together. (Romans 15:5-7)

(See Appendix 5 for further tips and guidelines.)

Appendix 1

The Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:5-13 “When you pray, don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth that is all the reward they will ever get. But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. “When you pray, don’t babble on and on as people of other religions do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again. Don’t be like them, for your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him! Pray like this:

Pray daily to

Recount God’s greatness

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

Isaiah 40:25-31

Respond to God’s purpose

Your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven

Matthew 28:18-20, Luke 10:27, John 15:1-17, Acts 1:8

Receive God’s provision

Give us today our daily bread

Philippians 4:6-7

Relate to God’s forgiveness

Forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors

Ephesians 4:31-32

Request God’s protection

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one

I Peter 5:8

Jesus teaches us to pray daily through an overview of life that is essential for living life in dependence on our Heavenly Father.

Appendix 2

S.O.A.P

Mediating on the Word of God is all about moving from seeing scripture as hearing about God to hearing from God. As you begin pray and ask God to speak. The purpose of S.O.A.P. is to help us move from being a hearer of the word to a doer of the word.

“So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls. But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don’t obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don’t forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.” James 1:21-25

Journaling is an excellent way to both record and process what God has spoken to you. Recording makes it tangible and promotes accountability for the truth God is speaking to us. While journaling is a very personal time with the Lord, our humility in sharing it with our group brings His power for growth.

S for Scripture - Seek the Lord in setting up a plan for reading from the Bible. Take time reading and allow God to speak to you. When you are done, review what portion of scripture particularly spoke to you that day, and write it in your journal. (For reading ideas go to www.RockPointChurch.org A reading guide is at: www.Divinementor.com, or choose a book and read it through 5-6 times in a week)

O for Observation - What do you think God is saying in this scripture? What timeless truth, principle, practice or priority is being presented? Paraphrase and write this scripture down in your own words, in your journal.

A for Application - Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what He is asking of you in following Him. Write how this scripture can specifically apply to you today. What does obedience look like for you? How does this relate to your life with Jesus?

P for Prayer – Now put your obedience into a prayer. Write your prayer asking God for His faith and power in following Him in what He is asking you to do through His word.

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” John 14:21

Appendix 3

Accountability Questions

Ask these questions to stimulate a community of mutual confession of sin in a place that values being known, accepted, supported and developed. Create a culture of running to grace not only through meeting together but calling one another during your struggles. James 5:16

1. How has someone hurt you or robbed you of your joy? Did you forgive them? Have you continued to remain angry toward another?
2. Have you lacked integrity in your financial dealings? Are you honoring God in your giving? What are you coveting that does not belong to you?
3. What are you worrying, over anxious or lost sleep about this week?
4. How have you given a verbal witness of Jesus Christ to a nonbeliever? How have your actions been a witness to the love and reality of Jesus Christ? Who are you praying for?
5. How have you spent quality relationship time with family and friends? How have you been generous and honoring of them?
6. Are you receiving the teaching of the Word and Worship on Sunday morning? How are you serving God in using the abilities He has given you?
7. How have you given in to an addictive behavior, pattern or stubborn habit this past week? How have you talked badly about someone else this week? Explain.
8. Have you had any flirtatious or lustful attitudes, tempting thoughts, or exposed yourself to any explicit materials, which would not glorify God?
9. Have you given daily time to the Scriptures and the Lord's Prayer? What is something God is asking you to do?
10. How have you told any half-truths, avoided disclosing, or shared in a way that puts you in a better light to those around you?
11. How did you see God in your everyday life this week? What happened?

“Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?” Romans 6:1-2

Appendix 4

GROW Mentoring Model

A simple and flexible structure for mentoring and providing for the needs of pastors and leaders is a mentoring trio. Each time you meet, each participant takes on one of three roles: a) The mentor, b) the mentored, c) the observer.

Let's look at each role with more detail:

The role of the mentor: The mentor's main task is to ask good questions. This is based on the conviction that the mentored needs to reach his or her own conclusions for there to be true change in his or her life. The mentor is NOT the answer person. He or she does not even need to have an answer in mind. Instead, he or she should ask good questions to help the mentored, with the aid of the Holy Spirit that is within them, to find the direction they are lacking. The mentor uses a paradigm of four steps (GROW), asking questions in each of these areas:

Goals (What the mentored desires to change in his or her life.)

Reality (What is the person's reality: what impedes change and what contributes to it.)

Options (Generally a person can see a few options, while there are usually a half dozen. Another pair of eyes can help someone think outside their box. Seek to help him or her to list these options, starting out with a time of brainstorming where everything is valid.)

Work Plan (Prioritize the best options and move toward it through planning concrete steps to be carried out and ways of being accountable in doing so.)

The role of the observer is to write down their observations while the mentoring is happening, and at the end lead a time of evaluation. Normally the observer does not participate actively in the mentoring process. He or she may intervene on occasion, but not to the extent that causes a role switch. The interventions, when necessary, should be quick, so that he or she can go back to just observing. This observer:

Writes down observations about a) goals, b) reality, c) options, and d) work plan.

Signals when there are 10 minutes left and again when there are 2 left, to help the mentor know when the allotted time of 40 minutes is ending.

Facilitate a 5 minute evaluation period, seeking first the opinion of the mentor and then of the mentored;

Ask the mentor to give a grade on a scale of 0 to 10 to him or herself and to briefly explain their grade.

Ask the mentored to give a grade for the extent to which they felt that what they hoped to accomplish occurred and also to give a grade to the mentor.

Observer gives a grade to the mentor, commenting on two things that they did well and only one area in which they might grow.

Basic Questions for Each Step

Goal: What is the area or relationship you most wish to change? (*About 5 minutes including an initial prayer God's guidance*)

Reality: What is the present situation? How did this problem come about, and what is keeping it from being resolved? (*About 10 minutes*)

Options: What are some options for solving this problem? What is another option? (*Brainstorming; about 10 minutes*)

Work plan: (*about 10-15 minutes including a final prayer by both mentor and mentored*)

1. Which option or options do you prefer?
2. What are some concrete steps needed to make this option reality?
3. Would it help if we wrote down dates to complete each step?
4. Who could support you in acting out this plan? Who could you be accountable to?

Evaluation: The observer concludes with the summary time as described. (*About 5 minutes*)

Guidelines or Suggestions for Each of These Four Areas

A. Goal

Review. Repeat what you understood the other person to be saying until he or she says you really understand.

Be objective. Help the mentored be as specific and concrete as possible, leading him or her to indicate their preference if more than one goal is actually indicated.

Responsibility. The mentored needs to take responsibility for his or her life, having a personal goal, not a goal for change in others.

The goal can be modified once you understand the person's reality better.

Written goals: the mentor, the mentored, and the observer should all write down the goal once it is finally stated to insure clarity. This could be during the reality section if the goal cannot be initially identified.

If the goal is too large/broad, ask what some components of this goal might be, and help the person choose one of them as their goal for this session.

The emphasis of the mentoring process is the present; ministries that deal with life restoration are more prepared to deal with the past.

B. Reality

Keep the focus. Don't ask about the person's reality until you have some idea of a possible goal. Don't dive into the past. In this model, the focus has to be the present. What do they want to change in a present behavior or begin to do?

Identification. If all possible look for how you identify with the person's struggle or desire briefly comment and illustrate how you do.

C. Options

Brainstorming period in which everything is valid. Don't evaluate the ideas right away.

Written Options: one excellent way of listing good options in a short period of time is for the mentored, the mentor (and even the observer) to brainstorm for 2-3 minutes in silence, each one writing down options, and then share.

Enumerating options: help the mentored share first and everyone writes down what is mentioned in a numbered list. Then the mentor can add his or her options continuing the numbered list. This way everyone can follow along on their own list when there is some change or comment related to one of the options.

Produce hope: if the person arrives depressed or with a sense of being the victim, they need to gain a sense of power, of confidence that they themselves can change their lives. If the options don't produce hope, there is the possibility of moving into a mini-prayer ministration time, starting out with the mentor opening his heart to Jesus.

D. Work plan

Answer the four key questions listed above under Work plan.

1. Which option or options do you prefer?

2. What are some concrete steps needed to make this option reality?
3. Would it help if we wrote down dates to complete each step?
4. Who could support you in acting out this plan? Who could you be accountable to?

If time runs out, the mentor can ask the mentored to reflect on the options within the next 24 hours, and then email the other two trio members a work plan and the name of a person to whom the mentored can be accountable outside the group if possible.

Appendix 5

TIPS – GUIDELINES

Why three men with men and women with women

It is important that people in each group are the same sex to encourage intimacy, honesty and a pure heart. By ourselves we are powerless. Two you can fool. Three is just enough to relate to. A cord of three is not easily broken. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

How do I go about finding my Trio?

This might be the most difficult part of establishing your Trio. Spend time praying and asking God to reveal to you who He has already chosen for you. We generally want to find someone that we feel has the same position, values or life experiences, but instead of finding the person we have one more reason to justify why we cannot be in accountability. It can take some time, but at some point it will be necessary to commit and start meeting. Hearing from God for the right person is critical; you will be sharing your heart at vulnerable and intimate levels.

How often do we meet?

Deep grace filled relationship is the goal of Trios. This can only be experienced in part through consistent connecting. We can talk about quality but in part quality only comes through quantity. We highly recommend a commitment to meeting weekly as a group. Life schedules are very challenging. When our Trio meets less than weekly and then a sickness, business trip or other unavoidable disruption occurs we quickly come to feel disconnected.

Meeting that Develops Confidentiality and Trust

Accountability and vulnerability in Trios is extremely high. Wounding, mistrust, hurts and offenses are powerful weapons in the evil ones arsenal. Working through the past, our emotions, and gaining victory from these stubborn strongholds have strong roots in our hearts. Keeping confidences and growing in trust is imperative for a grace-filled successful group.

How long do I have to commit to my Trio?

Getting into a group is an extremely hard first step. Knowing how long to stay in one is important also. Satan wants for us to stop just short of God's glory or our benefit. When things get difficult or we get too close to our heart our automatic response will be to quit, run and hide or find excuses to stop meeting. We are conditioned to build up walls to protect our hearts; the purpose of Trios is to help tear those walls down and for the body of believers to start functioning like a body. Learning how to deal with our feelings, emotions and reactions will overflow into all other areas of our lives. Make a commitment early in your Trio that before you quit, you will pray it through together and be unified in the decision.

Is it worth the cost and investment?

Yes! Our culture and our churches are scattered. We are disconnected, uncaring and busy. We are right where Satan wants us. We can continue to live our lives knowing something needs to change but never change, or we can step outside our comfort zones with what we know and risk being known. It's scary, but love casts out all fear. It's inconvenient, but the benefits include weightless consciences, light hearts, friendships that buoy you, not being alone, no more rationalizing and actually doing something about something, seeing true change in your life. Is it worth it?

Appendix 6

Self-Evaluation of Relational Health

Give yourself and your spouse (or best friend if you're single) a score of 0-10 in each of the following areas. Where relevant, briefly explain your scores. If single, skip items that have to do with marriage or children.

Me	Spouse (or best friend)	
___	___	1. Relationship with God (spiritual life)
___	___	2. Devotional life
___	___	3. Emotional health (stability and energy)
___	___	4. Physical health
___	___	5. Finances
___	___	6. Ability to rest
___	___	7. Growth (in character, competency and vision)
___	___	8. Health of your marriage (if single, health of your friendship)
___	___	9. Fulfillment of role of husband/wife (if single, fulfilling role of friend)
___	___	10. Sexual fulfillment (if single, ability to relate well to the opposite sex)
___	___	11. Relationship with your children (if single, with your extended family)
___	___	12. Relationship with a small accountability and mentoring group
___	___	13. Relationships with your ministry team
___	___	14. Productivity (seeing results from your efforts)
___	___	15. Fulfillment in your calling and ministry
___	___	16. Relationship with your ministerial (professional) mentor – specify names
You: _____ Your spouse _____		
___	___	17. Relationship with your pastoral (personal) mentor – specify names
You: _____ Your spouse _____		
___	___	18. Close or intimate friendships outside of marriage

The following eight items focus on your marriage. Indicate to what extent you feel each of you is expressing yourselves well in these areas. If single, apply this to your best friend.

___	___	19. Love that demonstrates it values the other
___	___	20. Healthy boundaries (respecting each other's boundaries)
___	___	21. Interdependence (sharing your decisions, not walking alone)
___	___	22. Attentive listening
___	___	23. Romance (if single, a sense that God is blessing your friendship)
___	___	24. Celebrating differences (rejoicing in them instead of them being stressful).
___	___	25. Support for the marriage (received from people outside the marriage)
___	___	26. Conflict resolution

Describe the area in which you would most like to grow in several sentences on the back.

Appendix 7

Theology of Trio Groups

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.”
Hebrews 12:1-2, James 1:19-21, Eph. 4:20-24.

Coming into the Light

Accepting my forgiveness in Christ as I honestly share my heart confessing my sins, addictions and brokenness

Eph 4:31 – 5:16, 1 Tim 4:10-16, Heb 3:12-15, James 4:1-9, James 5:16, 1 Peter 5:5-7

Abiding in the Light

Looking to hear the heart of the Father as I follow Jesus in the spiritual disciplines

John 15:1-17, Matt 4:1-11, Luke 5:16, 11:1-9, Romans 5:1-5, 12:1-2

Walking in the Light

Holding each other up in the heart of the Spirit through accountable relationships of unconditional loving grace

Gal. 5:16-6:2, Eph 4:1-3, Eph 4:30, Eph 5:18-21, Romans 8:1-39, 15:5-7

Reflecting the Light

Our life increasingly reflects the loving presence of Christ becoming the witness of God’s redemptive purpose to the world.

Colossians 4:2-6, Matthew 5:16, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20