

# How to Facilitate Effective Small Group Discipleship

## The Process, Purpose, Pitfalls and Pleasure Therein

Keywords: facilitate, effective, small group, discipleship

### Small Group Model

- Personal, dedicated walk with the Lord and others
- Commitment to seek the Lord individually together (corporately)
- Personally seeking the Lord while we walk in community connected with our group
- Submitting to, committing to, body life/ group life together

“Jesus said several times, ‘Come, follow me.’ His was a program of ‘do what I do,’ rather than ‘do what I say.’ His innate brilliance would have permitted him to put on a dazzling display, but that would have left his followers far behind. He walked and worked with those he was to serve. His was not a long-distance leadership. He was not afraid of close friendships; he was not afraid that proximity to him would disappoint his followers. The leaven of true leadership cannot lift others unless we are with and serve those to be led.”

Spencer W. Kimball

### Small Group Discipleship

- The real, messy, relational model of loving and accepting people right where they are at, while walking alongside them towards Christ as the Holy Spirit is conforming each of us into His image.
- Messy = unique people having authentic interactions

### Process

- The planning behind setting up and running small groups

Questions to ask Holy Spirit that will help us understand what we’re doing and how we’re doing it.

## What?

- What are we doing here?
- What are we going to teach/lead?
- What kind of group are we running?
- What are we going to walk through together?

## Where?

- Face to face?
  - At the church? At someone's home?
- Virtual?
  - Which platform?
    - Zoom or Messenger video or Google Meet...

## Who?

- Who is it that You have for me to invite?
  - Coed or Same sex group?
    - Will I need a co-leader of the opposite sex?

## When?

- Start and end dates
- Honoring start and end times
- What seasons or holidays will fall during our time together?

## How?

- How will this time together look?
- How will it be ordered?
- How will our group run?
  - Expectations on participants
  - Expectations on you as leader

## Purpose

### Why?

- The purpose for running a small group
  - Why this study?

- Why this type of group?
- Why now?
- Why is this study or type of group timely for this season?
- Why them? ( the people you're inviting)
- Why me?

-What makes small group discipleship unique is that you, as leader, are not absent from the process. You are also a member of the group walking towards the Lord.

-You should expect, as the facilitator of a small group, to be learning as much or more than those you are walking with. You will be learning from the Lord and from others in the group.

-This time that you are committing to lead this group should be transformational for you and your understanding. It should be confrontive, in the best of ways, where the Lord is using situations in group to bring up things in you and your leadership that still need His healing, deliverance, direction, training, and Truth.

-You are committing to growing right alongside people in understanding how much you constantly need the Lord, and the ways He is desiring to grow you up.

Asking purpose driven questions keeps you ever mindful that the Lord is intimately concerned with your growth also.

-He is not more interested in the people He's sending you to.

-He will use every leadership context to talk to you about Himself and yourself and your need for Him.

-He is not sacrificing you, or your growth or good, so that He can reach them.

## Pitfalls

“We need to remember that a certain degree of conflict and uncertainty will always occur in any people-system. The point is that we do not have to allow conflict and uncertainty to lead us into wrong or inappropriate behavior as leaders - the pitfalls. So when we talk about ‘pitfalls’ here we are not only talking about the things themselves but how we react or respond to these things as leaders.”

Rod Woods, Freed to Lead, p.407

- Feeling like you have to control how group goes
  - Expect it to be messy
  
- Not respecting people’s time
  - start when you say you will, end when you’ve said you would
  - you can choose to offer an early out or extended session
  
- Not keeping confidentiality
  - People will not share if they don’t feel safe, or that their information isn’t safeguarded.
  - If your people aren’t sharing, then you don’t really have a small group.
  
- Taking attrition or loss of group members personally
  - Your success is not measured in how many people come to or stay in group. Your success is measured in your submission alone.
  - It is not your job to draw them, neither is it your job to keep them.
  
- Thinking it is your job to “fix” the people the Lord sends you
  - It is His job to handle His business with His people.
  
- Not knowing when a conversation needs to go on in private
  
- Forsaking the silence
  - Don’t try to fill all the empty space with your voice.

-Hiding behind your leadership role

-The work the Lord wants to do with you is not more important than the work He wants to do in you.

-Polarizing conversations

-hyper emotionally-charged conversations

-It is not that these aren't conversations to be had, it's that this is not the appropriate time and place to have them.

## Pleasure

-All of this that you are being called to is for your good, even if it is not for your ease. Because of that, you can take joy in your journey.

## Romans 5:2-5

“Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God’s glory. We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance. And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

## James 1:2-5

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing. If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.”

-It is not a surprise to the Lord that you will need Him and His help during this journey. He stands ready with all the wisdom, grace and mercy you will need.

## Final Charge and Encouragement

Matthew 28:18-20

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

-Jesus takes this command, this “Go”, and He wraps it in Himself. The Lord has encouraged you to go and make disciples in this way. Be sure of this, you can go because Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth, and because He is with you even to the end of the age.