

LIFE GROUP STUDYGUIDE February 21, 2010

JUST FOR THE LEADER

How do you handle those people in your group who are so needy that they exhaust everyone else?

First, you need to distinguish between people with deep personal needs and people who just have bad habits. The first needs major surgery; the second, loving confrontation.

For instance, “John” always dominated the discussion in our small group. He shared the same problem every time we met but didn’t do anything about it. (It was a problem he could have worked on but chose not to). He just enjoyed people sharing in his self-made suffering. Now some problems are out of your control and take some time to repair. Others can be repaired through simple steps of obedience and discipleship. The challenge for the leader is to determine which is true about the person who dominates your group sharing and prayer time.

I had to confront “John” in this area. After loving confrontation, he was able to make the steps necessary for spiritual growth. He eventually shared a praise report in this area – the group was excited. Unfortunately, not all situations work out this easily. I have had to “blacklist” people with a track record for causing problems. In such cases, I denied them sharing rights in group until they showed some spiritual growth in this area. If they were faithful and made progress in their spiritual life, they would be granted access back into group sharing time. Now, this was done after many attempts to help them grow. Hint, hint: don’t blacklist someone after one or two times.

When you confront someone you have to be prepared to have some steps ready for them to take to get better. Just pointing out their faults with no plan for hope for them is bad leadership. Pray about how to confront them – and please don’t do it in group in front of everyone. Have lunch with them or have them stay after group. (One on one is how discipleship is done)

We will always face EGR (extra grace required) people. For some, a short talk will solve the problem. For others, a more severe measure is needed. But almost any disruption can be wisely handled by suggesting continuing the conversation after the meeting is concluded or offering to pray for the person in that moment. Don’t give up on people with challenges. Learn how to lead them toward success and discipleship in their lives.

PRAISE AND WORSHIP IDEA

What you need to bring:

Large poster board

Post-it notes of varying colors and sizes

1. READ, or have someone read, the following Psalm:

*Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.*

Sing to him, sing praise to him;

tell of all his wonderful acts.

Glory in his holy name;

let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Look to the Lord and his strength;

seek his face always.

Remember the wonders he has done,

his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced. Psalm 105:1-5

2. Give each of your group members a number of Post-it notes (5 to 10). Place the poster board in the middle of the room on the floor or with the permission of your host hang it on a wall.

3. Have your group members think back on the last month or so. For what are they thankful?

4. Ask them to write one praise on each Post-it note and then place them on the poster board.

5. In closing, refer back to the scripture, Psalm 105. What are the instructions of this passage?

Give thanks

Call on his name

Tell of his wonderful acts

Sing to him

Rejoice

Seek his face always

Remember what he has done

6. Take a moment to read the Post-it praises as a prayer.

7. Lastly, challenge your group to buy (or give them some) more Post-it notes and every time God does something wonderful in their lives have them write on a Post-it note and put it on their desk, bathroom mirror, or refrigerator. It will be a reminder to always praise God.

ICE BREAKER

Question: What makes up a good church?

Question: What does the Bible say makes up a good church?

Church is meant to be more than a spectator sport. It's not about showing up on Sunday morning, enduring the service, tossing a buck in the offering plate and heading out with a sigh of relief that we've done our duty. It's about being part of a family where people are living out authentic relationships with God and each other.

Finding your place in a large congregation can seem a little daunting. That's where Life Groups come in. Jesus mission was to see people connect, grow and serve in the local church body. The best way to accomplish this is through Life Groups. We desire to see you do those three things: connect, grow and serve. How do we do that as Life Groups? How do you find your place in the local body and fulfill the Jesus Way Mission? Life Groups!

Let's look again at a Mission Statement we've been studying in services:

A MISSION STATEMENT

"To **CONNECT** people to Jesus Christ and to one another – to **GROW** in the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Love – to **SERVE** others in Christ-like humility."

CONNECT

Connecting is all about relationships... with God and one another. The place to begin connecting is in our church services. But this is only the beginning of connection. If you really want to connect to the church, you have to get connected to a small group of people. You know, people. The kind that share birthday parties, anniversaries, and meals with you. The kind of people that will be there for you when you are sick, go through tragedy, or need encouragement. The kind of people that will help you grow spiritually and build you up in Christ. This is real connection. You can't get that from just attending church. Why? Because most of the time you are in church, you are not connecting with people. For the most part, you are singing and listening to the pastor. If you come on time and leave when the service is over, you may get 5-10 minutes of connecting with the people there. You need more than that to grow as a believer and in His local church body. You need a small group – You need Life Groups!

Read Acts 2:42-47 and list all the ways the early church connected with each other.

Also, attached at the end of this lesson, is "59 One Another Scriptures". That's 59 more reasons to connect to the church.

GROW

Growing is bigger than just connecting. It is systematically and consistently studying God's Word (in church services, Life Group, classes, personally, etc) and applying that Word. That means knowledge is not the end of growth. You don't really grow until you do something with the Word you learn.

We also believe that spiritual growth happens best in connection with others. That's where our Life Groups comes in. If you are not connected with a small group of disciples, you cannot grow spiritually. Spiritual life happens in a group, not alone. You do need the time alone with God, but in a group is where ministry, discipleship, serving, encouragement, accountability, love and many other wonderful things happen.

Read Luke 2:52 together and see how Jesus grew.

SERVE

Journeying with Christ is more than connecting and growing. We believe we're called to reach our church family, our community, and the world with the love of Christ. These tangible expressions of God's love are seen in those who roll up their sleeves and serve.

I would encourage all of our Life Groups to find one place of service inside the church and one place outside the church. Life Groups might raise money for a local mission or find a community project to get involved in; they might volunteer in our Preschool one Life Group night (have group on another night) or pick up trash around our parking lot. The opportunities to serve are limited only by the imagination.

The "WWJD?" slogan "What Would Jesus Do?" needs an additional slogan - "HWJDI?", "How would Jesus do it?" That is the point: not just what we do, but how we do it. The Jesus way of serving is servanthood. We have to follow Jesus way of serving and make his kingdom, *his way, our way*. It means we give up our self-centered kingdom for God's kingdom. To serve is to perform an act of love, but most people fail to serve because they have a sense of scarcity in their own lives. You can only serve out of abundance. God is enough and His Kingdom is sufficient. It will never pass away. Servanthood is not just a set of generous actions. When we die to our own kingdoms and to ourselves, we get the fruit that only comes from a life in His Kingdom.

Read Mark 10:45 and see how Jesus served.

QUESTIONS

1. Are you connected to a Life Group (the question was not "do you attend a Life Group?") Are the people in your Life Group your friends? Are these people the ones you rely on? Can they rely on you? Are you there for the group?
2. Do you desire to connect in a deeper way? How do you think that can be accomplished?
3. List some practical ways you and your Life Group can connect in a better way.
4. Are you growing in your Life Group? How are you helping others grow spiritually?
5. Do you desire to grow in a deeper way? How do you think that can be accomplished?
6. List some practical ways you and your Life Group can grow in a better way.
7. Are you serving through your Life Group? What areas of ministry are you involved in? If not, what areas of ministry excite or interest you?

8. Do you desire to serve in a deeper way? How do you think that can be accomplished?
9. List some practical ways you and your Life Group can serve in a better way.
10. Have you ever known somebody whose entire life was one of servanthood for God's kingdom? What makes this person stand out in your mind? Was it what he did, how he did it, or both?
11. What is one area in your life where you can relinquish control to God? What does it mean for you personally to give up your kingdom in order to be a servant in God's kingdom?
12. Is serving something you do or is it your nature?

Notes from the weekend's sermon

2 Timothy 4:2-3 AMP

Jeremiah 31:14 NASB

2 Peter 1:1-4 NIV

Definition of participants

"To partner, to fellowship, to share, to participate"

Genesis 1:26-27 NIV

Proverbs 12:28 NIV

Genesis 2:17 NIV

Genesis 3:1,5 NIV

James 1:14-15 NIV

2 Timothy 1:10 NIV

Romans 8:1-2 NIV

2 Peter 3:18 NIV

1 Corinthians 13:13 NIV

Matthew 5:43-44 NIV

In Jesus we see two things:

1. We see God
 - Hebrews 1:1-3 NIV
2. We see what human beings are supposed to be

The 59 “One Anothers” of the New Testament

1. “...Be at peace with each other.” (Mark 9:50)
2. “...Wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14)
3. “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
4. “...Love one another...” (John 13:34)
5. “...Love one another...” (John 13:35)
6. “...Love one another...” (John 15:12)
7. “...Love one another” (John 15:17)
8. “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love...” (Romans 12:10)
9. “...Honor one another above yourselves. (Romans 12:10)
10. “Live in harmony with one another...” (Romans 12:16)
11. “...Love one another...” (Romans 13:8)
12. “...Stop passing judgment on one another.” (Romans 14:13)
13. “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you...” (Romans 15:7)
14. “...Instruct one another.” (Romans 15:14)
15. “Greet one another with a holy kiss...” (Romans 16:16)
16. “...When you come together to eat, wait for each other.” (I Cor. 11:33)
17. “...Have equal concern for each other.” (I Corinthians 12:25)
18. “...Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (I Corinthians 16:20)
19. “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (II Corinthians 13:12)
20. “...Serve one another in love.” (Galatians 5:13)
21. “If you keep on biting and devouring each other...you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:15)
22. “Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.” (Galatians 5:26)
23. “Carry each other’s burdens...” (Galatians 6:2)
24. “...Be patient, bearing with one another in love.” (Ephesians 4:2)
25. “Be kind and compassionate to one another...” (Ephesians 4:32)
26. “...Forgiving each other...” (Ephesians 4:32)
27. “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.” (Ephesians 5:19)
28. “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)
29. “...In humility consider others better than yourselves.” (Philippians 2:3)
30. “Do not lie to each other...” (Colossians 3:9)
31. “Bear with each other...” (Colossians 3:13)
32. “...Forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.” (Colossians 3:13)
33. “Teach...[one another]” (Colossians 3:16)
34. “...Admonish one another (Colossians 3:16)
35. “...Make your love increase and overflow for each other.” (I Thessalonians 3:12)
36. “...Love each other.” (I Thessalonians 4:9)
37. “...Encourage each other...” (I Thessalonians 4:18)
38. “...Encourage each other...” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
39. “...Build each other up...” (I Thessalonians 5:11)
40. “Encourage one another daily...” (Hebrews 3:13)
41. “...Spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” (Hebrews 10:24)
42. “...Encourage one another.” (Hebrews 10:25)
43. “...Do not slander one another.” (James 4:11)
44. “Don’t grumble against each other...” (James 5:9)
45. “Confess your sins to each other...” (James 5:16)
46. “...Pray for each other.” (James 5:16)
47. “...Love one another deeply, from the heart.” (I Peter 3:8)
48. “...Live in harmony with one another...” (I Peter 3:8)
49. “...Love each other deeply...” (I Peter 4:8)
50. “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.” (I Peter 4:9)
51. “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...” (I Peter 4:10)
52. “...Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another...” (I Peter 5:5)
53. “Greet one another with a kiss of love.” (I Peter 5:14)
54. “...Love one another.” (I John 3:11)
55. “...Love one another.” (I John 3:23)
56. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:7)
57. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:11)
58. “...Love one another.” (I John 4:12)
59. “...Love one another.” (II John 5)