

Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership

By Carl F. George

Introduction to Part 1

Small-group ministry must accomplish three goals:

- Provide nurturing relationships in the presence of Jesus Christ
- Invite other to faith in Jesus Christ
- Reproduce a new set of leaders so new groups can be formed

Chapter 2: You Serve a Powerful God

What you mean by “small group”

- A small group is a face-to-face meeting that is a sub-unit of the overall fellowship

Introduction to Part 2

What does a healthy partnership between a pastor and a lay worker look like? The lay minister will be encouraged, helped, and empowered to do the following:

1. Check in with the church staff so they will view you as partner in ministry.
2. Recruit your replacement, even before you hold your first meeting.
3. Keep reaching out between meetings, cultivating new contact.
4. Prepare for every meeting in prayer and by involving your apprentice.
5. Conduct your meeting, keeping it on track.
6. Bring your people to worship for your weekend services.
7. Teach people how to give to and serve each other as well as those outside the group.
8. Do evangelism from the group by building bridges of friendship with the unchurched.
9. Stay before the Lord, deepening your own spiritual life of faith.

Chapter 4: Connect with the Leadership Network in Your Church

How to Connect:

1. Accept leadership responsibility for your group.
2. Establish goals for your group.
3. Be available for individual and/or group coaching sessions.
4. Cooperate with the coaching process.
5. Understand how respect for authority strengthens faith.

Forms to guide the coaches as they take reports

- What are some good things that are happening to the people in your care?
- What progress are you seeing in your apprentice; in identifying additional rising apprentices?
- How many seekers or newcomers were present at your last meetings?
- How many meetings ago did a coach or staff member visit your group or team meeting
- What's next for your group?
- What's next in your own leadership development?

Regular, quality supervision can compensate for lack of extensive training.

Chapter 5: Recruit a Leader-In-Training

How to Recruit:

1. Commit yourself to being a leader who produces other group leaders.
2. Recruit apprentices who are willing to serve as leaders-in-training.
3. Use spiritual-gift identification to draw untapped talent into leadership training roles.
4. Train your apprentice by modeling and feedback.
5. Make sure your apprentice has access to training beyond what you can provide.

Avoid Patterns that Lead to Burnout

- Get them involved in ministry that's consistent with their gifts.
- People will burn out if they're not supervised, appreciated, or kept from being stretched too thin.
- People who are encouraged to use their giftedness report new energy and joy in using them.

Between meetings, apprentices can help with. . .

- Praying
- Debriefing
- Phoning
- Arranging childcare
- Contacting prospects
- Ensuring follow-up on a care need
- Phoning unusually quiet group members
- Contacting absentees

Chapter 6: Invite Newcomers to Your Group

How to invite:

1. Meet with your leadership nucleus.
2. Understand the mathematics of invitation.
3. Create a contact list.
4. Prioritize the contact list.
5. Be warm and enthusiastic.

Some possible priorities to consider:

1. New visitors.
2. Newest members.
3. Unchurched friends in the workplace and neighborhood.
4. Uninvolved members and adherents.
5. Referrals from surveys or from staff contacts.

Chapter 7: Prepare Yourself to Lead the Meeting

How to Prepare:

1. Make time for reflection and for seeking God's guidance.
2. Realize that each meeting starts and ends twice.
3. Review the group's need for loving, learning, tasking and maintaining.
4. Design an agenda that you will personalize to your group.
5. Decide what leadership roles you'll ask others to take.

Your group, regardless of its state purpose, will do four things every time it meets.

1. Love- Care, encouragement, mutual support, listening and sharing
2. Learning
3. Tasking – every group does something that benefits people outside the group
4. Maintaining – need to take a few minutes of its time together to address scheduling

Tips on Studying God's Word

1. Pray – commit your study time to God
2. Reflect – Read and meditate on the text
3. Expand – Learn the larger context of your passage or book
4. Apply – Ask 'so what?' questions

Chapter 8: Meet Together for One-Another Ministry

How to Meet:

1. Model an environment that facilitates mutual ministry.
2. Think through the anatomy of a typical small-group meeting.
3. Protect your group from the enemies of effectiveness.
4. Make regular adjustments designed to help newcomers feel welcome.

5. Remember that meetings have value in themselves because of spiritual gifts.

Three simple, trust-affirming covenants for your group to consider:

1. "I will not violate the Golden Rule in how I use information shared in the group."
2. "I will restrict my confessions to my own sins and my own areas of needed improvement."
3. "I will ask, 'If Jesus were here, what would He do or think about this issue?'"

Extra-care-required people might create turmoil. They regularly:

- Disagree with the leader.
- Attack someone else present.
- Criticize the behaviors of others.
- Dominate the discussion time by talking incessantly.
- Complain about the church services, staff or program.
- Behave rudely or cynically.
- Refuse to cooperate with distraction control.

Every Meeting Can Be a Positive Experience

- Create a level playing field – the opportunity to make a "childhood confession"
- Use bonding questions – "What was the center of warmth in your home?"
- Avoid yes-no questions
- Focus on discussion- sharing questions
 - "What do you think about that?"
 - "Who has seen this principle at work lately?"
 - "Does anyone have a comment or additional point of view?"
 - "When would that idea be most helpful for others of you in this group?"
- Ask permission to hold a discussion until later
- Set an example by admitting the growth challenges you face
- Offer non-threatening ways to pray
 - Follow a model prayer...
 - Read a printed prayer...
 - Pray and personalize the Scriptures...
- What happens between gatherings one-on-one often contributes more to the effectiveness of your group than the actual meeting itself.
- What the meeting does is to give legitimacy to the care that happens between meetings.

Chapter 9: Bring Your Group to Worship

How to Bring Your Group to Worship:

1. Protect the cell meeting as a listening place that emphasizes care.
2. Underscore the advantages of being part of a larger body.
3. Set an example by sitting with members of your group during worship.
4. Plan group events that overlap with worship services
5. Work with your apprentice to lead group members into new service times.

Chapter 10: Serve the Group and Others Beyond

How to Serve Others:

1. Remember that serving is an important act in obeying God.
2. Continue in present serving capacities, realizing that you share important ministry with your pastor.
3. Listen carefully for personal needs disclosed in your group which you can meet.
4. Begin to extend acts of serving to people beyond your group.
5. Combine spiritual gifts and serving to build bridges and win a hearing for Christ.

Chapter 11: Win the World as Jesus Would

How to Win:

1. Notice what the Holy Spirit is already doing.
2. Be willing to respond to opportunities for telling your story and Jesus' story.
3. Exercise faith for the people God will bring your way.
4. Ask God to show you two unbelieving persons who are struggling.

Simple Ways to Tell Your Story

- You saw what I was.
- You see what I am.
- Jesus made the difference.
- Are you interested?

Chapter 11: Seek God's Renewal as You Meet Him in Secret

How to Seek:

1. Recognize the value of a secret life with God through Christ.
2. Make time for solitude.
3. Be part of a small-group community.
4. Maintain a lifestyle characterized by simplicity.
5. Exercise faith.

My readiness and intentions in my role as		
<input type="checkbox"/> Small Group leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Apprentice leader	<input type="checkbox"/> Future apprentice or group leader
(Please place a ✓ for all that apply)		
<input type="checkbox"/>	1. CONNECT	I will be available for debriefing interviews with the church staff
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. RECRUIT	I will recruit my replacement(s) before we begin meeting with the group, and I will help y replacement(s) develop an ability to lead.
<input type="checkbox"/>	3. INVITE	I will reach out between meetings, cultivating both old and new contacts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	4. PREPARE	I will prepare my mind and heart for out meetings and will include my apprentice(s) in the process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	5. MEET	I will conduct meetings that encourage believers and accept seekers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	6. BRING	I will bring group members to worship for the church's weekend services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	7. SERVE	I will serve others with my gifts, knowledge, energy, time and money, conscious that my greatest influence may occur as I set an example.
<input type="checkbox"/>	8. WIN	I will make time to build acquaintances with unbelievers, serving them at their points of struggle.
<input type="checkbox"/>	9. SEEK	I will meet regularly with God in private prayer
_____		_____
signed (yourself)		date
_____		_____
signed (witness)		date

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