

## House Community Leadership Basics

The goal is to provide the basic tools and understanding of leading a house community. Topics to be included: house community leading, identifying and empowering leaders from within, shepherding and caring for people and living missionally within the house community.

The house community is our primary form of church. It's our way of practicing what we must be living out in the world – loving God and loving people. As we encourage each other and hold each other accountable to living and obeying the Bible, we'll learn to live life together as a family and move out into the world to love and make more disciples.

### :: HOUSE COMMUNITY LEADER self evaluation

The life of the house community begins with the life of the leader. Though we support one another as a family and there are days where we do not “have it all together.” Our own spiritual well-being is most important in nurturing our own love for God and for having life to pour into others.

Don't forget – your first job is to LOVE GOD, enjoy him and dive headlong into his love for you as his son and daughter. Some questions to ask yourself as you are leading others:

- § Am I experiencing God right now as **Father, Forgiver** or **Friend**?
- § Do I have regular **solitude** time w/God and His Word?
- § Am I **listening** to God and doing what he wants?
- § Are there things I need to **confess**?
- § How can I **celebrate** w/God just for today?
- § Have I told God that **I love him**?
- § Have I embraced the fact that **he loves me**?

### :: leading house communities

Leading a house community must be simple enough to be easily transferrable. This is so leaders can be trained and everyone to participate. There are three basic elements in a house community. You can choose one idea or method per category [Welcome, Worship/Waiting and Word] to lead with for that session.

A group can last up to two hours. But you should listen closely to the Holy Spirit and allow for Him to lengthen and possibly even shorten the time. The Holy Spirit may lead you to break with the plan and just pray for people. The Holy Spirit may show you that you need to stick with the plan and move past comments that are off-topic and distracting. The point is this: listen to the Holy Spirit.

The basic outline of a house community gathering:

1. **Welcome** – The point of the “Welcome” time is to help us practice being a family by sharing stories, struggles and encouragement. It’s also a way for everyone to participate.

Ideas for practicing welcome [pick one]:

### § Share Stories of God:

Pose the question, “Where have you seen God this past week?” or “What are some stories of God’s faithfulness this past week?” and allow time for individuals to respond.

### § Three Questions:

Pose the following two questions to the group and allow time for each person to respond.

- A. What’s one thing you’re thankful for?
- B. What’s one thing you need?

After everyone has responded, pose the following question and allow the group to respond.

- C. After hearing people’s needs, what are ways we can come and help each other?

Allow the group to support, provide care or aid and encouragement one another.

2. **Worship/Waiting** – The goal of the worship and waiting time is to focus our attention on God’s goodness, faithfulness and his being. In addition it provides us time to listen intently for what God is saying to us and the group and to make sure God is leading the group.

Pick one of the following ideas. You may only have time to do either a worship activity or a waiting activity and not both.

### § Worship Ideas:

- A. Worship Music – Sing songs via guitar, CD’s, MP3’s or with just voices.
- B. Visual Worship – Share a video clip, visual object that helps us see God more clearly.
- C. Visual Psalm – Share a Psalm with the group. Ask the group to clear their minds and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind anything He wants as the Psalm is being read. Share what the Holy Spirit has brought to mind.
- D. Personal Psalm – Have each person write out a Psalm to God – incorporating praise, frustration or hope and other emotions we are currently experiencing. It can be in the form of poetry, song or a letter. These can be shared in the group or not depending on the level of intimacy in the group.

## § **Waiting:**

A. Group – Have each person ask God [silently] if He has a word or direction for the group. Allow about 10 minutes and have each person share what God has brought to mind.

B. Praying for Others – Break up into groups of three and have two people pray for the third in the group. Have the two that are praying ask God to give them a word or picture for the person they are praying for. After waiting on God for a few minutes, pray the words or pictures that were given over that person as an encouragement, blessing or exhortation.

3. **WORD** – The goal of this time is to both understand and obey what is written in the Bible. The leader should have studied the passage in advance and worked their way through one of the following Bible study methods. There must always be a way for us to practice what we've just read – either immediately or during the week [to then be shared about the following week]. Discussion time should be more focused on self-discovery [asking good questions and reflectively listening] and less on the leader teaching.

## **Bible Study Methods** [choose one]:

§ **Group Dialogue** – Group discussion can be fostered by asking the group what strikes them about the passage and what questions they have about the meaning. The leader should reflect the questions back out to the group and listen for what the Holy Spirit is bringing to the surface and what He's trying to teach the group. At the end we should have answered the following questions:

What is the passage saying?

What does it mean?

How will we obey or live out what we've read?

§ **Group-Discovery Questions 1** – The group should work on the questions for a particular passage one week in advance and share them as group discussion.

What does the passage say about God?

What does it say about people?

What does it call us to do?

§ **Group Discovery Questions 2** – The group should work on the questions for a particular passage one week in advance and share them as group discussion.

What does it say?

What does it mean?

What do we do?

Who will I tell?

§ **Group Reinterpret** – Break up into groups of 2 or 3 and have each group study and hypothetically re-explain to a friend who has no knowledge of the Bible what the passage means. Each group can do the re-explanation back to the larger group.

## :: LEADER'S CHECKLIST

The house community leader has several functions in shepherding the group and raising up new leaders. An organic way for the leader to make other leaders is to always bring along someone as an apprentice in **EVERYTHING** you do. This way they see, help coordinate and can replicate what is being done. You will eventually need to explicitly pose the challenge to the person to become a new leader and allow him/her to make the commitment.

Simple way of understanding leadership development/multiplication:

§ **Model** (I do; you watch)

§ **Assist** (we do together)

§ **Watch** (you do; I watch)

§ **Leave** (you do; someone new watches – the process begins again)

As has been discussed, everything must be evaluated according to the following:

§ How does this help us love for God?

§ How does this help us love for people?

§ How are we making disciples who follow Jesus passionately?

Lastly, two of the most important tools of the leader are to **ASK QUESTIONS** and to **LISTEN ATTENTIVELY**. Coaching your leaders [as well as discipling others] is not telling someone what to do and how to do it. It is rather listening and asking good questions in such a way that the developing leader learns to think for him/herself. Active listening and question-asking assume that leaders have all the resources they need within themselves [especially the presence of the Holy Spirit] to take the next step forward in their own development. You are not only helping them think for themselves, but modeling how they can do it for others. ASK and LISTEN.

Here is basic checklist for the house community leader as he/she shepherds the group:

§ **Prayer**: Have I prayed/listened to God for direction of our group? Have I been praying for individuals in our group?

§ **Community/Family**: Are we welcoming to everyone regardless of background? Are we able to share

our lives with each other?

§ **Truth**: Are we engaging the Bible and living obediently to it?

§ **Disciple-Making**: Am I actively pouring my life into one/others and helping them connect to God on their own and live in active obedience?

§ **Mission**: How are we tangibly loving our world and putting ourselves in position to share about Jesus? Are we looking for and helping our people look for persons of peace to start new house communities?

§ **Multiplication**: Am I multiplying leaders to lead every aspect of the group [leadership, administrating, caring, food, worship, etc.]?

§ **Empowerment**: Does everyone have a chance to contribute out of their gifting [ie. shepherd, teacher, prophet, evangelist and apostle]?