

Planning for discipleship

1. What are the primary goals for church small groups? (10min)

- Acts 2:42-47
- James 1:22

Three key goal areas – and what might the key target be for each?

(a) _____

- Key focus area: _____

(b) _____ one another

- Key focus area: _____

(c) _____ others / Make disciples

- Key focus area: _____

Q - What do you think might be needed to achieved these goals in a *sustainable* way?

HABITS

2. What might weekly Connect Group programme need to include? (10min)

The small group 'agenda'

W – W _____: Help people relax and open up

W – W _____: Help people authentically express their love to God
(turn focus from each other to God)

W – W _____: Learn and apply God's Word

W – W _____: Encourage and facilitate outreach

W – W _____: Cast vision for upcoming happenings (sell purpose, not program)

What is flexible, and what is not?

The two Ws we must always have are... _____

...because...

Do we need to always have the other 3 Ws, and why?

3. Discussion leading skills

The key to great conversations is _____

(To change lives, they must be genuinely _____)

(i) Questions

Launching Questions

Guiding Questions

Application Questions

E.g. Acts 2:42-47

Title: _____

Launching Questions

Guiding Questions

Application Questions

Planning for discipleship

4. The essentiality of small groups to the function of the Church

Sermon – see podcast at C3 City Church Tauranga website

(The early Church met in large and small groups. What happens if we don't meet in small groups? What if we don't meet in large groups? What then are the mission and purposes of the Church small group? What is their relationship to the larger congregation? [Amplification])

5. Understanding the small group life-cycle

Stage 1: _____

The group is new. The vision is cast and feels exciting. New relationships are forming. It is dynamic.

Stage 2: _____

Members get to know each-others' personalities: Some talk too much, others too little, some are opinionated, some always crack jokes etc...

Stage 3 _____

The group is gelled. Members know and accept each other, and hopefully enjoy coming to the group.

Stage 4: _____

The group is intentionally turned toward to look beyond itself. Gifts and abilities are recognised and empowered. Continued health now depends on balancing the _____ efforts with the _____ life of the group.

Stage 5: _____

More than a stage, this is the product, by God's grace, of a healthy group.

Which is the most dangerous stage, and why?

How this relates to what the leaders does

E.g. The welcome

Stage 1 – build _____ / learn ABOUT each other

Stage 2 – build _____ / learn about what each other THINKS AND FEELS

Stage 3 – build _____ / learn about GIFTING, MISSION, PURPOSE, VISION

E.g. the focus

Stage 1-2: More focus to _____

Stage 3-4: More focus on _____

6. The essentiality of annual goals to a life-changing small group

A vision without a plan is a dream _____

A plan without a vision is a dream _____

A vision with a plan is a dream _____

(i) Personal goals (from our 'Mentoring' form)

-----'Holistic Health Check'-----

Measure the 8 aspects of the life (the sides of the barrel).

What needs work / prayer / discipline? Rate out of 10.

- Relationship with God
- Work / School
- Family / Marriage
- Finance
- Physical / Health
- Social / Friends
- Recreational
- Ministry or voluntary service (*including outreach*)

Leadership notes:

- Areas for growth can inform the content and activity plans
- Reminders could be put in calendars to encourage individuals in their application at relevant times in the year (E.g. to attend a Marriage Course in July).
- Group members could be given a copy of their goals in July and October to discuss and refine their goals and application for the next season of time.
- **The result?** _____ **(testimony)**

(ii) Outreach goals

- List:
- 5 friends _____
 - _____ (for prayer and conversation)
 - _____ (connection points for personal and group activities)

Leadership notes:

- The leader keeps a master list (being awareness of necessary confidentiality)
- These people are prayed for in group time each month
- Members encouraged to intentionally engaging conversation + share testimony monthly
- The group considers group activities to connect with new friends via shared interests

(iii) Group goals

In view of the above (but without necessarily being limited to it) the group (or leaders) establish the groups yearly goals, which define its plans.

Clear goal-setting empowers intentionality in leadership,
resulting in measurable life-change!

7. Discussion skills Part II: Group involvement and management

To achieve group and individual goals its essential that all members feel and are involved.

- **L _____ a question**
 - **TIP 1:** Open ended questions are the general goal
- **I _____ a response**
 - **TIP 2:** Resist the temptation to do all the t_____
 - **TIP 3:** Do NOT teach - remember you are a F_____ not a T_____
 - Your goal is to get everyone to participate
 - **TIP 4:** How you treat their responses will either generate or stop true discussion
 - E.g. "Thanks, great answer..."
- **G _____ to another person**
 - **TIP 5:** A discussion is more effective if everyone participates. You will need to develop the art of drawing in quieter ones.
 - Don't always stop with one reply - "Thanks, anyone else?"
 - Remember – looking at someone gives them permission to talk.
- **H _____ the response**
 - **Who do you have?** Joker, quiet, talkative, excitable, distracted, serious, sincere?
 - **When interrupted:** Remember, looking at a person gives them permission to talk.
 - **When a 'talker' consistently dominates:** Talk to them in private, asking their help to draw out the quieter ones (and give them praise for their help afterward).

Help to clarify by asking questions, e.g.

- What do you mean by... Could you elaborate... Is this what you mean...

Handling difficult questions

- If you don't know something – affirm the question ('Great question!'); admit what you don't know; ask if someone else does know; offer to come back the next week with some thoughts - or ask if someone else is willing to.

Handling "wrong" answers

- Avoid telling someone they are wrong as much as is possible.
- Acknowledge their answer while soliciting another: *"That was a good attempt ... how about Mary ... what do you think?"*

Handling irrelevant questions and getting back on track

- Acknowledge the question and redirect the discussion back to it's objective: *"Great question – but that's not really related. Could we consider that another time?"*

Handling silence

- Do not be afraid of silence! Give people time to think. Rephrase your question.

Physical dynamics /(Where people sit)

- Leaders should be spread out to aid interaction
- Eye contact – the group leader should be able to look everyone in the eye
- The assistant leaders role - to support, help the focus, help with the involvement of the various group members.

- **T _____ time to apply and envision**

- The greatest goal is always application!

Never tell when you can ask.

Questions are the key to life-changing discussions.

8. - Planning checklist - (Pulling it all together)

- **Social to start the year (relationship)**
- **Goals session next (vision)**
 - o **Individual goals** (8 areas)
 - o **Outreach goals** (5 friends, hindrances, interest)
 - o **Group goals** (invite ideas)
- **Calendar – Note column**
 - o Church events and courses etc. go in first
 - o Note members birthdays etc.
 - o Note when you could give reminders to members related to their goal (e.g. a marriage course)
- **The ‘5 Ws’: Remember, the two we must-haves are the ‘welcome’ and ‘works’**
 - o It’s always about people. It’s always about vision
 - o It’s like a sandwich; the rest are optional. Mix it up.
- **Welcome**
 - o Consider opening-ended questions to help the group progress from knowing names and occupations – to understanding thoughts and feelings – to teamwork!
 - o Revise any specific applications of last weeks’ discussion/study
- **Worship**
 - o Add the applications of the three goal areas (Loving God & one-another, make disciples)
 - Pray for the 5 friends
 - Testimony re what they are getting out of their Bible reading
 - Testimony re conversations engaged from the desire to encourage faith
 - o Remember worship in small groups isn’t only about singing. It is about contributions of prayer, testimony, Scripture, prophecy. It needs a *facilitator*.
 - o Involve members in leading
- **Word**
 - o Plan content based on the church leaderships directives and things from the group members goals and discussions. This way your ‘agenda’ is their agenda.
 - o Remember – facilitating discussion is more effective than didactic teaching (we remember 10% of what we hear, 40% of what we say, & application’s the goal).
 - o Involve members in leading.
- **Witness**
 - o Set aside bits of time to plan how you socially connect with others as a group
 - o Revise outreach lessons learnt (conversational skills, how to share gospel, etc.)
 - o Revision puts lessons into long-term memory. Focus on 4-6 weeks before events
 - Week 1– pray for friends, discussing how to utilize coming opportunities
 - Week 2 – Plan your outreach, revising conversational skills
 - Week 3 – Revise gospel and testimony skills
 - Week 4 – Check planning and pray.
- **Works**
- (i) Note all church events in your calendar
- (ii) Note when you need to promote your own events
- (iii) Share vision for the next week’s meeting
- (iv) Share vision for what they can do in the coming week – applying what has been learnt

Closing points:

- Disciples are made, not born.
- The key word for a disciple is ‘*choice*’, while for a disciple-maker it is ‘*intentionality*’.
- With practice, the above can become habit/intuitive – while it feels like details to start.
- **Is the intentionality worth it?** *When you find there has been measurable growth in people’s lives each year as a result, there will be no question.*