

## **LEADERS NOTES**

This material is to spur questions and discussion. Let the Holy Spirit guide the conversation. You DO NOT have to “get through” all the material. But to affirm the “point” of the lesson.

### **- Open In Prayer**

#### **- Announcements:**

Mens Nite Out- Wing nite Nov 24 6:30pm Location: FlightDeck  
Come for a night of Fellowship and encouragement  
Sign Up For Guess Whose Coming To Dinner-  
Prepare yourself for a Fun Evening!  
Hearing God Sundays 9am.  
December 9 Christmas Banquet - Fundraiser for The Hub.  
The Hub meets a vital need in our area helping people that fall through the cracks of other programs. Come out to hear what they are doing in our Community

#### **Last Weeks Key point:**

If we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then his gifts are made manifest in us for the whole body of Christ. To bear witness of the work of Christ for the whole world, the filling of the Spirit and to build and serve each other.

**Follow up and review last weeks discussion**, What was it about? What stood out? What Impact did it have on you, at work with your family?

### **Our Reaction to the Spirit**

**This Weeks Passages to Study: Read aloud: 1 Kings 19, Acts 1:14**

#### **Obediance**

This past Sunday David Started out his sermon asking the question :”I wonder What were they (The crowd in Jerusalem) thinking and feeling”?

Discuss Probable Thoughts \_\_\_\_\_  
**from Acts 1:4 Discuss: Why did they Obey?**

**Answer:** Here is what one commentator says about this passage:

*1:4 What Jesus told His disciples to wait for in Jerusalem was the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49; cf. 1:5; John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7).*

***It must have been difficult for these disciples to wait for God to do what He had promised, as all Christians find it is. Jesus viewed the Spirit as a significant gift of God’s grace to His people (cf. Luke 11:13). He is not just a means to an end but a major part of the blessings of salvation.***

***Question then: What does this mean in our (today) relationship with the Holy Spirit?... Discuss the meaning of “significant Gift of Gods grace”...***

***Discuss: “He is not just a means to an end” What end? Discuss “major part of the blessing of salvation”***

*“No New Testament writer ( Luke ) more clearly emphasises [sic] the Divine Personality and continuous power of the Spirit of God. Thus in the two-fold emphasis on the Exalted Lord and the Divine Spirit we have the most marked feature of the book, namely, the **predominance** of the Divine element over the human in Church life and work.”[29]c*

**Acts 1:14 Read What are the implications of this?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comentary:**1:14The apostles gave themselves to prayer (Gr. proseuche) probably for the fulfillment of what Jesus had promised would take place shortly (cf. Dan. 9:2-3; Luke 11:13). “The” prayer (in Greek) suggests that they may have



# **Leaders, Don't forget to Read and Focus this month in The Disciple Makers Handbook. Especially This Months Focus On Chapter 4 : Relationships**

## **Here is a bit of extra reading to help you to shepherd your Group, Ponder and ....?**

Building Real Relationships

What you can do outside of small-group meetings

By Carter Moss

Dairy Queen, the arcade, the bowling alley, the movie theater, the swimming pool, the campground, Disneyland: what do all these places have in common? Yes, they're all fun places to go, especially with kids. But more than that: these are all places where I have hung out with my small group. And I'm incredibly grateful for that! Through time spent in these environments, we've created some great long-lasting memories, lived some really funny stories, shown our kids the value of community, and—most importantly—deepened our relationships with each other.

Have you ever wrestled with how to get the people in your group to form deeper relationships that go beyond surface level? I have. Sometimes we tinker with the meeting format: more time at the start to let people catch up with each other, more time at the end so people can socialize, better icebreakers, more time for prayer requests, more in-depth study questions. I've tried all of these strategies in the various groups I've led, and I'm actually a big fan of them. But often we can miss one incredibly important thing—the solution doesn't always lie in tweaking the meeting format. One of the best ways to build and strengthen relationships in a small group is to spend time together outside the small-group meeting.

I love that that the Gospel writers intentionally included so many examples of Jesus hanging out with his small group of disciples—eating, attending weddings, visiting people, spending time on the lake, and more. They did so much more than just talk about Scripture and pray together, although that was obviously a very important part of their relationship. They shared life together. And I believe Jesus modeled this for a reason.

I know what many of you are thinking: I have enough trouble getting people to make time to show up to small group. And now you're saying I have to get them to show up to even more stuff? That's a great question. For the answer, let's look at some ways we might accomplish this. Be warned, though: A few of these ideas might push us out of our comfort zone.

### **Plan Group Activities**

One of the best places to start with relationship building outside of meetings is simply to schedule some fun activities that the group can do together. What kind of activity? That's up to you and your group! There are only three real boundaries with this. The first is that you should choose something the group is interested in. For instance, if camping isn't something that all group members are interested in, don't plan a camping trip.

The second boundary is to choose something that won't confuse people in their spiritual journey. For instance, just because you're okay with meeting at the local bar or watching the latest horror movie doesn't mean your group members will be. Be aware of any spiritual struggles that your activity might awaken.

Third, is that you need to keep the cost in mind. It can be very uncomfortable and even embarrassing for people in the group who might not be able to afford to join in the group activity. When I've suggested ideas that might be cost-prohibitive, I have said out loud to the group that we don't want that to be an obstacle, and I've encouraged the group members to contact me individually to let me know if it's a challenge for them. Then when someone does contact me, we can find a way

to work it out, or I plan for a different idea.

There are all sorts of things to do including dinner or dessert out, bowling, skating rinks, movie theaters, rock climbing, holiday festivals, the zoo, the beach—and lots more! The real question is: which one is right for your group

### **Making Time**

Wondering how the people in your group will have time for activities? One idea is to do something on the night your group normally meets in place of the usual group meeting. I've planned weeks, sometimes even spur of the moment, where we scrap the study and grab ice cream instead. And, to be honest, those often end up being the most memorable small-group meetings we have, with meaningful discussions and authentic sharing. No matter what, though, they're fun and life-giving for people stuck in their tiring, chaotic lives. If you have an activity that works better on the weekend or at some other time, that's okay too.

To make some margin for the activity, you might cancel group that week so that people have extra time for this activity instead. I know for some of us, the idea of cancelling group freaks us out—it freaked me out for a long time! But then I realized that it's okay to cancel once in awhile. I can assure you that the group won't suddenly implode, and God's kingdom work doesn't halt to a stop. In fact, people really appreciate it, and the break in our usual rhythm to have some fun really energizes everyone for when we return to our "regularly scheduled programming."

### **Family Friendly**

I think it's awesome to do activities that involve the whole family. This makes it easier logistically for all the families who struggle to find childcare, and it's a great way to model community, fun, and healthy relationships for our kids. It lets them watch how we interact as adults. At the same time, I think it's valuable to have a few specific outings without kids for some focused quality adult time. You can either challenge everyone to find their own babysitter, or have all the kids hang at one group member's house with a sitter there, which is a great way to allow them a fun time of their own.

### **Frequency**

The frequency of group activities is entirely up to you. I've done it just a couple times a year, and I've had groups with monthly activities. Only you can know the right amount of activities for your group, but I'd challenge you to do something at least three or four times a year. And if thinking up ideas, planning them, and executing them isn't your strong suit, this is an excellent opportunity to involve the strengths of other people in your group. I've found it to be a great way to engage the person who gets really excited about social gatherings and maybe isn't super involved in any other way like leading, hosting, or contributing a lot to the discussions. You can have one person become the "social coordinator," or you can have different people organize outings each time. This results not only in more fun for the group and less on your plate, but also in more ownership by the members and better retention of newer members.

### **Encourage Individual Friendships**

There are a lot of options for organizing activities for your entire group. But if that's your only approach, there are some drawbacks. First of all, you'll create a bottleneck—either you or the person who's organizing the social events. Second, it can be difficult to find activities that everyone in your group can agree on and can make time for. Whole group activities are a great start, but it shouldn't be the place you stop. The next way deepen relationships is to encourage group members to get together with another person or family from the group on their own.

There are several ways to do this. For example, I have challenged my small group with this: "Over the next two weeks, pick at least one other person or couple from the group and invite them over to hang out." I let them know it could be dinner or dessert, meeting up for coffee, or meeting at the park so the kids can play. Consider challenging your group to do something like this, and perhaps give them a specific timeframe or specific options to help them follow through. Remember, though, that you have to model this. So invite someone over, and consider picking the person you know the least or the person who hasn't been invited by anyone yet.

Some people get nervous about this because they fear cliques forming within the group. As a leader, you have to keep an eye on them to ensure that it never becomes detrimental or overly exclusive. But it's okay for people to make some "best friends" within the group. What beautiful fruit to come out of our small groups! I also appreciate that sometimes a few families or people will really bond and later decided to branch off and start a new group, which means another group was formed to help people experience community. In one of my groups, there were two couples that lived near each other and were going through the same life stage. They were pregnant at the same time, so they really bonded, and a strong friendship formed. And I loved it! Plus, when it came time for me to transition out of the group, they were able to step up and lead it together.

### **Rhythms of Life**

There is still one more level of creating relational time outside of group. On one hand, it's sometimes the hardest step relationally; on the other hand, it fits the best into the natural rhythm of people's lives. This eliminates the "we don't have time to fit one more thing into our schedule" barrier. And it all begins with this question: What activities are you already doing in your life, and what would it look like to start including others?

### **Holidays**

Holidays are a great place to start. For many years now, we join with a group of friends from small group to take our kids trick-or-treating. It definitely makes the night more chaotic trying to keep track of all the kids, but it's a blast. And now my kids don't know any different, which I love. The same goes for the Fourth of July. Every year we're in town for the holiday, we have a barbecue with families from our small group. And a few years when we had no family in town, we've done Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner with families from the small group. To some, these holidays are meant to spend with family. Perhaps spending the day with people from your small group seems a bit too radical. But let me challenge you with this—why not share these experiences together? It seems to me that if we want to do life together, this is what it looks like.

### **Kids' Activities**

Think about the other rhythms in your life. If your week is spent taking your kids to sporting events or school plays and choir concerts, why not invite others in the group to come watch? We've done that as a small group, and it's not only a fun time to hang out together, but also a supportive time for the families because they like knowing there are others cheering on their kids.

### **Vacations**

If you're ready to take a bigger step, consider going on vacation with other families from your small group. I'm not a huge camper, but I've brought my family on multiple weekend camping trips with friends from our small group. It was great because we got to go with people who actually know how to camp! And yes, we even went on vacation to Disney World with some families from small group. I'm still not sure how we managed to walk all those miles through all those parks and get on all those rides with so many kids, but we had a blast. We still share those stories today.

### **Deepen Relationships**

There is no doubt that spiritual growth is our goal in small groups, but sometimes we don't go deep enough with our relationships, and they're just as important. In fact, what often drives people to check out a small group in the first place is their desire for relationship. Adults crave genuine friendships like they had in high school and college, but it's so much harder to find now. If it doesn't come from neighbors or coworkers, where can those types of friendships develop? Weekend church services are great, but it's hard to get too deep when you only see people for a few minutes before and after service. That's where small groups can provide the opportunity for people to build genuine relationships, sharing life and growing spiritually. If you become a leader who creates opportunities outside of the weekly meetings for fun, memories, extended conversations, and real relationship building, you can help people have—often for the first time—one of the most beautiful experiences God wants for them: authentic life-giving community.

—Carter Moss is a pastor and is passionate about small groups and relationships; copyright 2014