COMMUNITY
LEADERS
TRAINING

Facilitators Guidebook

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended for use with a series of short videos dealing with leading communities. Each video is approximately 10 minutes long and is designed to provoke thought and further reflection. While the videos can be viewed by individuals, we feel they will have maximum benefit if they are screened within a group setting. In that case, this may be facilitated by an elder or experienced community leader, followed by a discussion.

Each page of this booklet provides a brief overview of the key concept of the video, followed by personal questions that can be used for self-examination, then several suggested questions to promote group discussion. Needless to say, a facilitator may wish to use all, some, or none of these questions. Finally, there is space provided for each individual to make personal notes.

We hope you enjoy the videos and that they prove helpful in further equipping you to lead your communities well.

SESSION OVERVIEW

MAKE THE VISION CONCRETE
SESSION 1

OVERVIEW

Community is essential. There is no healthy church without healthy community. While we need large gatherings of the saints, we also need smaller, more intimate, family times together. Vision can be cast by elders but is made concrete in community.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I building a sense of community or simply facilitating meetings?

- Is there a sense of the life of Jesus when we get together?

- How often do people in my community get together, outside of Sunday and Wednesday?

- Does everybody in my community feel known and feel like they belong?

- Is there a sense of family within my community?

- Is every person being looked after spiritually, physically, emotionally and financially?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- How do we assess whether there is life in our communities?

- Are we focused simply on Sundays and Wednesdays, or are we devoted to meeting together daily?

- What can we do to bring our communities into greater health?

- Is each person being effectively loved and discipled within community?

- Does each community reflect our vision and values?

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STUNG BY KILLER BEES
SESSION 2

OVERVIEW

What qualifies a person to be a community leader?

There are many, including a love for God and for His people. Another key qualification is willingness. God can do amazing things through us if we are only willing to make ourselves available to Him.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I willing to do whatever the Lord asks?

- Am I willing to do whatever my leader asks?

- Am I willing to keep going when times are tough?

- Am I willing to step outside of my comfort zone?

- Do I doubt my gifting and calling? If so, why?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- How willing are we to take risks on people?

- How do we help people grow into their calling?

- How do we develop a culture where people are willing to step out?

- Do we see potential and calling in people?

NOTES

CARRYING IT LIGHTLY
SESSION 3

OVERVIEW

What is a community leader? What expectations exist for community leaders?

It's important to understand that it is a leadership function and carries a delegated authority from elders. Community leaders are key to ensuring that every person feels loved and is looked after.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- What are my giftings?
- What giftings do others in the community carry? Are there people who can help host?
- What is my leadership style?
- Where am I leading people?
- Does each person in my community have an opportunity to contribute?
- Am I raising new leaders?
- Am I having fun?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Have expectations been clearly communicated from elders to community leaders?
- How prescriptive are the elders about how each community is run?
- Is there a sense of team between elders and community leaders?
- Is there a sense of team in leadership within each community?
- Do community leaders receive the support they need?
- Does each community carry the same vision and values?

NOTES

THE GOLDILOCKS PRINCIPLE
SESSION 4

OVERVIEW

How big should a community be? There is no rule, but there are principles that we can apply to ensure that communities are places where people are effectively discipled.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I guilty of comparing the size of my community to others - either negatively or positively?

- What is my real capacity to effectively look after people?

- Is everybody in my community known and being looked after properly?

- Are people willing to be open and real in my community?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- We often say we look at health rather than numbers, but can numbers be an indicator of health?

- How big is too big?

- What should we do if a community hasn't grown over a long period of time?

- What is a healthy and faith building way to reduce the size of a large community?

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DOING LIFE TOGETHER
SESSION 5

OVERVIEW

The term community is not simply a cool name for a home group. Language shapes thinking, and therefore behaviour. The name community was chosen because that is exactly what we want to see – a sense of community being developed. We should be looking to see people meeting together daily, doing life together, not simply attending meetings. Such communities are the basic building blocks of a healthy church.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I administrating meetings or helping build community?

- Is there a sense of family among the people in my community?

- How well does my community reflect Acts 2:42-47?

- How do I encourage a sense of belonging?

- Do I set the example of living life with church family outside of Sundays and Wednesdays?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Is the life of the church confined to meetings?

- Do we see spontaneous times of prayer, worship, fellowship, among the congregation?

- How can we encourage people to 'meet daily'?

- How does our language and behaviour reflect our values in this matter?

- Are we over reliant on Sunday or Wednesday meetings?

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MCDONALD'S OR STEAK?
SESSION 6

OVERVIEW

Many of us live busy lives, but if we believe that community is important and if we wish to honour the people that are joining us, we need to ensure we are properly prepared each time we get together. Of course, after preparing well, we should be willing to cast our plans aside should the need arise.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Where does community truly lie in my list of priorities for the week?

- How much time do I spend before God praying for the people and hearing what He wants to do?

- How do I prepare myself for the meeting, as well as prepare what I want us to do?

- How easy is it to set aside what I have planned if necessary?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- What is expected of me as a leader in terms of the time I should invest into community?

- How can I be better prepared in future?

- How do I decide what should be done at any given meeting?

- What should I do when I get so busy it becomes difficult to spend time preparing?

- What does it mean to be Spirit led in this context?

NOTES

WAR AND PEACE
SESSION 7

OVERVIEW

This session illustrates the difference between peacemakers and peacekeepers and the importance that this plays in the unity of a community.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I afraid of conflict?

- How well do I handle difficult conversations?

- How equipped do I feel in such situations?

- Can I bring the truth in love?

- Is there real unity in my community?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Do community leaders have the necessary support from elders in dealing with conflict?

- Is there true unity within the leadership team – among elders, deacons and community leaders?

- How do we effectively train our leaders to be skilled in handling conflict and confrontation?

- What do we do if a person reacts badly to a community leader speaking into their lives?

NOTES

ONLY MULES AND HORSES
SESSION 8

OVERVIEW

Would you rather ride a horse or a mule? It is easier to lead people that are ready to run, so long as they are easily steered. We want to be easily steered, and to raise other people to be too.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

• Am I ready and willing to run?

• Am I someone that is easily steered?

• Am I encouraging or discouraging an environment where there is a priesthood of all believers?

• What can I do to create a safe place where people will take risks and step out?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

• How do I know when to let somebody run with something?

• What are the risks and rewards involved in releasing people into more of what God has called them to within a community?

• What role does character play for believers ministering in community?

• Should people ask for permission before starting something?

• How do I deal with a gifted or willing person who is also difficult to lead?

NOTES

THE SCHWARZENEGGER EFFECT
SESSION 9

OVERVIEW

We all want to look good and have a tendency to present ourselves, and our communities, in such a way that we will receive the approval of others. If we want truly healthy communities then we need to be willing to reveal our weaknesses. Acts 2:42-47 shows us what a healthy community looks like – we can use this passage to audit ourselves and see where we need to change.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- When last did I audit my community?

- When last did I ask somebody else to come and audit my community?

- What are the strengths of the community?

- What are the weaknesses of the community?

- What aspects of my leadership can I do better?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- How much support do our community leaders receive?

- Is each community audited regularly?

- How can we strengthen weaknesses and add what is lacking in each community?

- Is there a weakness common to many of the communities within the congregation?

- If so, how do we deal with this congregational weakness?

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THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTABILITY
SESSION 10

OVERVIEW

Accountability is spoken about often. It is important to get this right. Our teaching on holiness and sanctification, and our teaching regarding accountability, should all flow seamlessly together. Accountability is a tool to help us become more like Christ. Sometimes though, the attitude of leaders can discourage accountability.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- How accountable am I?

- Is accountability a lifestyle or a system?

- Are those under my care living in accountability?

- Am I trustworthy with the things people share with me?

- Am I guilty of gossip?

- How do I respond to people who have sinned?

- Do I have any co-dependent relationships?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- How do we know when we need to share things with the elders?

- How do we handle issues of confidentiality?

- What legal implications might there be in dealing with situations people share?

- How do we process sin issues in a manner that represents Jesus well?

- Are we guilty of forcing people into a system of accountability?

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THE RED FERRARI
SESSION 11

OVERVIEW

The Roman Centurion understood the concept of delegated authority. Authority and responsibility are two sides of the same coin. There are many sources of authority; we need to understand the authority we carry, and how to carry it. We need to represent Jesus and the elders in order to carry true spiritual authority.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I a person under authority?

- Do I understand that any authority I carry as a leader has been delegated to me?

- Do I carry a spiritual/ prophetic authority?

- Do I Lord it over or serve the people?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- What do the elders expect of community leaders?

- Is there clear communication from the elders about such expectations?

- How does this delegated authority work practically?

- Who is responsible for the members of a community?

- How prescriptive should elders be about what happens in community?

NOTES

COFFEE - NOT JUST A KLAPPUCCINO
SESSION 12

OVERVIEW

Proactive discipleship is essential. This can often mean having coffee with people. This too must include times of encouragement and comfort, as well as correction and rebuke. We must build real relationships with people, not simply see them as projects.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Do I regularly spend time with each person in my community?

- Am I prepared to 'waste time' with people?

- Do I have real relationships with people in my community, or are my interactions merely functional?

- Do I take the time to encourage people in my community, as well as correct?

- Am I praying for the people in my community?

- Am I pointing people in my community to a preferable future?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Are the community leaders equipped to disciple others?

- Do we know the state of every sheep?

- Is each person being equipped and envisioned?

- Are the elders modelling this to the other leaders?

- Does every person feel loved and secure?

- Do people feel they only get time with us when there is a problem?

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LEADING VS MANAGING
SESSION 13

OVERVIEW

There is a significant difference between leading people and managing people. We are called to lead. This means being proactive. Many problems can be avoided if we anticipate them, and if we know the people within our community.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Do I have a vision for the community?

- Do I foresee issues or respond to problems when they arise?

- Am I able to envision people?

- Are my actions influenced by bleating sheep or am I the influencer?

- Am I shaping internal conviction or external actions?

- Do I effectively use logos, ethos and pathos in my influencing of others?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Are we reactive or proactive in our leadership?

- Do we spend most of our time fighting fires or preaching vision?

- Do we have a single, clear vision?

- Are we leading from our values?

- Are we effectively leading and influencing each person?

- Can we say, "Imitate me, as we imitate Christ"?

- Do our people feel loved?

NOTES

YOUR VOICE OR HIS?
SESSION 14

OVERVIEW

Our responsibility is to teach people to obey Jesus, and to hear His voice. Often we can be too quick to speak, or to give our advice. We should be training people to hear the voice of the Lord for themselves.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I able to hear the voice of the Lord?

- Am I too quick to give good advice?

- How can I help others hear the voice of the Lord?

- Do people in my community conform to my expectations, or those of the Lord?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- Where is the balance between a person following their own conviction and submitting to leaders?

- What should we do when people ask for perspective, e.g. on relocating, moving congregations, etc?

- Do our people truly believe that God can and will speak to them, and lead them in His ways?

- Are our people reliant on God or on their leaders?

NOTES

PAVEMENT CHOCOLATE CAKE
SESSION 15

OVERVIEW

The Great Commission is the responsibility of every believer. Yet leaders should be doing most of the discipleship and should be the greatest influence on the lives of believers.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Who is influencing the people I am leading?

- Whose is the loudest voice in people's ears?

- Am I teaching the people I lead to listen to the right voices?

- Am I actively and intentionally discipling people well?

- Do I know what issues people in my community are facing?

- Am I having the right conversations with people in my community?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- How do we teach people to listen to the right voices?

- Are we aware of popular teachings that might be influencing our people?

- What tools can we use to effectively disciple each person?

- Are we giving the full counsel of God?

- What is 'the more' within our context?

- Who are the next leaders that we are raising up?

NOTES

THE LEFT BEHIND
SESSION 16

OVERVIEW

We have a purpose: to glorify God by seeing people saved and discipled. Any community must praise God, disciple believers and reach the lost. If we are not reaching the lost then we are not fulfilling our purpose.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Am I committed to reaching out to the lost?

- Am I open to welcoming people who are unlike me?

- Am I equipping my community members to reach the lost?

- When was the last time I saw a salvation through the community?

- Do visitors feel welcome in my community?

- What, if anything, is preventing us from seeing people saved?

- Have I done everything I can to seek after any members that have gone astray?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- What can we do to reach out to the lost more effectively?

- Are we following up with visitors effectively?

- Are we following up effectively with people who have responded to the gospel?

- What can we do to encourage, activate and equip every person to be a seeker of the lost?

- Pray for the gift. If you have been hurt through the prophetic, and have not processed that, we encourage you to speak to a leader in order to gain perspective on this experience.

NOTES

COUNTING THE COST
SESSION 17

OVERVIEW

Wisdom determines that we should count the cost before we commence a project. Leadership carries a cost in terms of time, money, relationships etc. We need to be prepared to pay the price and persevere - even when things get tough.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Have I truly counted the cost of leadership?

- Am I willing to pay the price?

- How do I ensure I persevere and overcome difficult situations?

- Am I a team player, able to support others and let others support me?

GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS

- As a team do we understand the costs of leadership?

- Do we model faithfulness and perseverance to others?

- How do we support our leaders through difficult times?

- When, if ever, is it good for a leader to step down? How should this be done?

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