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1. Introduction

This Small Group Leader Guide is provided to guide group leaders for Calvary Chapel Surprise (CCS). CCS has identified 5 types of small groups; the common purpose of the groups is to facilitate the growth in the grace, knowledge, and relationship of group participants with our Lord Jesus Christ and with each other. CCS desires everyone in the church to achieve Christian maturity evidenced by actions including meeting one another's needs.

The vision for the Small Group Ministry for CCS is to follow the pattern of the church in the book of Acts. The people devoted themselves to the teaching of the Apostles, fellowship, breaking bread together and prayer (Acts 2:42). The goal of the ministry is to facilitate spiritual growth in the group participants through the application of scripture that results in transformation toward Christ likeness.

The Small Group Leader represents CCS to the group participants. Therefore, the small group leader will be a regular attendee of CCS. Group leaders maintain contact with group participants. The goal is to demonstrate love through caring. As people grow and change the group leader facilitates movement to a different type of group as appropriate for the individual. Group leaders are also knowledgeable of all ministries at CCS enabling them to help the small group participant

connect with church ministries; to receive assistance, as needed, or to help them to get involved in serving through a ministry at CCS.

While fellowship groups will vary in size based on events, the ideal size of a group is approximately 14 (plus or minus 2). When the group is too large intimacy is impaired. When a Small Group gets too large, the group leader is responsible for facilitating the group to divide productively. The preferred method is for the leader to gradually turn over leadership to a co-leader while mentoring them. The original leader then starts a new group.

2. Small Group Types

There are 5 types of Small Groups. Each group type has a different emphasis.

2.1 Fellowship Group

Fellowship groups require the smallest commitment from group participants. Fellowship groups meet on a regular basis to form relationships with like-minded Christians. Frequency of meeting times may vary, but are strongly encouraged to be no less than monthly.

The focus of Fellowship groups is to form a network with other people who attend CCS and to maintain a connection with the

church. Fellowship groups are an excellent entry point to invite neighbors to meet people who attend CSS as an outreach to the community.

Fellowship Group Leaders will help people to understand the ministries offered at CCS and answer questions that people have about the church. The goal for Fellowship Group Leaders is to understand the spiritual gifts of group participants and to help the group participant identify and connect with ministries that match their spiritual gifts.

Fellowship Group Leaders will help facilitate the movement of group participants toward a deeper commitment to knowing God and obeying his commands.

2.2 Bible Study Groups

Bible Study groups are centered on learning and applying God's Word. Because a Bible study is centered on a book of the Bible, or a topical study, a Bible Study group may fluctuate in composition or attendance as the topic of study changes. In addition to teaching God's Word, the Bible Study Leader facilitates growth in the knowledge of God and the application of God's Word in daily life. Bible studies should focus on life transformation not just the acquisition of knowledge. For this reason, the study of

the Bible should have group discussion as a major component and not be a lecture format. The leader also helps to facilitate group participants to grow in their service to the Body of Christ and ministry to one another.

Because connection to the CCS body is important, the Bible Study leader will help facilitate participant involvement in other Small Groups and ministries of CCS. Because the Bible study goal is life transformation, the leader will help facilitate group participant migration to another group if that person leaves a study, or if they will not be continuing with the next bible study topic. In addition, as in all Small Groups, the Bible Study Group Leader will seek to understand the spiritual gifts of group participants and to help them to identify and connect with ministries that match their spiritual gifts.

During Bible Studies the group leader should facilitate and manage discussions about the text in harmony with the Calvary Chapel Distinctives and their application to the target book for the study.

2.3 Care Groups

Care Groups embody the concepts of fellowship, bible study, biblical

accountability, and supplying each other's needs. The Care Group is the most intimate Small Group. They are designed to equip and edify the saints. A Care group matches most closely the ingredients of the church described in the second chapter of Acts. Care groups require confidentiality and openness by the group participants. Care group participants form strong bonds with one another through commitment to help each other grow in their relationship with God and to live out His commands. Care group participants nurture one another while applying God's principles for living to the challenges of everyday life. This group grows by personal invitation.

The goal of a Care Group is life transformation through engagement with the Holy Spirit. The group leader uses bible study and discussion about life topics to help group participants to grow together and encourage each other in spiritual growth. Praying with one another as a group is also an indispensable component to the Care Group gathering.

As with the other small groups the Care Group leader maintains contact with the group participants, understands their spiritual gifts, and facilitates engagement with church ministries based on individual spiritual gifts.

Due to the intimacy of a Care Group, group splits are challenging. While the same general pattern of splitting will be employed, the group leader must be more sensitive to any issue that the split can create. The group leader determines the timing and the communication for the split.

2.4 Support Groups

Support groups are organized to support a specific need. They have a specific mission and like the fellowship groups they support one another by demonstrating the love of God to one another. The leader facilitates the application of God's Word to the activity. Support groups' leaders facilitate group participants to grow in the knowledge of God. The issue or need brings them together. The group leader is uniquely qualified and or trained in the topic for each support group.

Support groups reach out to the community and minister to the body of Christ. The concept of the community support group has as its main goal to be a place where individuals who have a common ailment or life pain can come and find a listening ear as

well as comfort from Scripture that will bring healing and encouragement. A Support Group meets the needs of the group participants by listening to their story and to encouraging them in the midst of their trial. They demonstrate Christ's love by caring. The group leader will also be prepared to share the transforming power of the Gospel.

If the Support Group participants move past the specific pain point or the support need ends, the group leader facilitates the movement of the participant to one of the other types of groups as the leader deems appropriate.

2.5 Mission Groups

Mission Groups are organized to support a missionary activity. While the goal is ministering to others by participating in mission activities, the leader also facilitates the application of God's Word in the mission activity. This group's meeting frequency may vary based on missionary activity. The leader facilitates the mission group participants to engage in another small

group that will facilitate spiritual growth like a Bible Study or a Care Group.

Mission activities typically take people out of their comfort zone leading to a new awareness of how God interacts with people that are from a different culture. The group leader helps group participants to grow spiritually by highlighting the reality of the transforming power of God evidenced in the missionary activities.

Mission groups coordinate activities and communication with the Missions Ministry of CCS.

3 Group Leader Role

The group leader is concerned for the spiritual growth of the group participants. The group leader aspires to demonstrate unconditional Christ-like love for the group participants. They need to know the group participants and work toward spiritual growth for each of them. Each type of group should minister to the group participants. The leader is a representative of CCS to the group they lead. As such, they must be conversant in the Calvary

Chapel Distinctives. The goal of Group Leaders is to discover the spiritual gifts of group participants and help them both identify and connect with ministries that match their spiritual gifts. They will maintain an awareness of the CCS ministries and were to find information about those ministries, how they operate, and who the contact person is for each.

3.1 Group Leader Qualities

Group leaders are servant leaders. They serve the people in the group and facilitate spiritual growth. They focus on the needs of the individuals in the group.

Group leaders are good listeners and work to understand the spiritual maturity of each participant. They work to understand their spiritual needs and help each participant use their gifts in ministry.

Group leaders facilitate planning for group activities consistent with the type of group.

3.2 Facilitating Spiritual Growth

Small Group Leaders shepherd their group to discover more about God and the

application of God's word to each person's life. The objective is life transformation through relationship with Jesus Christ and each other, and the application of God's Word that translates into action.

3.3 Facilitating Fellowship

Fellowship is likeminded Christians getting to know each other better. The Small Group leader facilitates activities to help each other understand spiritual backgrounds, spiritual gifts, and application to ministry at CCS.

3.4 Managing Discussion

The group leader will facilitate discussions for the small group. This includes encouraging everyone to participate, maintaining discipline, and redirecting those who may wish to dominate the discussion.

The objective of the leader is to facilitate an environment that helps each person to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and provide opportunity for all to engage in the interaction. The leader is responsible to select topics that help the

group to grow spiritually and to engage with the church.

In the case of fellowship groups, the leader may opt to solicit topics from the group participants. The goal for a group leader is to understand the individual's spiritual gifts and to help each person to understand how they can use them at CCS. For doctrinal discussions refer to the Calvary Chapel Distinctives authored by Chuck Smith.

4. Leadership Principles

4.1 Model Service

The group leader models service to the group participants. While "service" can be understood as the general application of kindness, the modeling of service is best illustrated by an effort to understand the person served. It is, by nature, a distinctive effort to appreciate the uniqueness of individuals. The group leader works to understand each person in their group and demonstrates God's love by ministering to their needs.

4.2 Model Devotion to God's Word

Group leaders provide Biblical Encouragement through a knowledge and application of God's word. The group leader studies God's Word and works with the Holy Spirit to grow personally.

4.3 Model Genuine Interest in Others

Group leaders have a genuine interest in helping others. Selflessness is a core component of the group leader.

4.4 Model Concern for Others Needs

Group leaders learn the spiritual and physical needs of group participants and help meet those needs through the small group and/or the larger body of believers. The desire is to invite the small group to be the first line of "need meeting" rather than institutionalizing this ministry. It is simply more meaningful and effective if it is more organic and local. Meeting these needs should come naturally if the small group is operating as designed. This is not to say that CCS as an organization would not assist, but it should not be the first stop in pursuing assistance. The skill of

listening and application of Godly principles provide the core of the ability to understand and meet the needs of others.

4.5 Model an Attitude of Prayer in all Circumstances

The group leader understands the power of God through prayer. The group leader leads the group in prayer and invites others to pray. The group leader demonstrates that prayer is the first course in times of trouble.

4.6 Model Healthy Boundaries

Leading a Small Group for CCS is a commitment to minister to the people in the group. While CSS encourages leaders to engage with their group, it is important to make sure that the leader sets healthy boundaries between their family and the needs of the group. The leader's family responsibilities have priority over their ministry responsibilities. It is also important for leaders to take breaks for themselves and the group periodically. CSS Small Group Leaders model appropriate ways of establishing and managing personal boundaries.

5 Calvary Chapel Distinctive

Small groups that are a part of CCS should reflect the character and philosophy of ministry described in Calvary Chapel Distinctives. Each small group leader will be expected to read, be familiar with, and be in agreement with the content of that document including the following:

5.1 The Character and Capabilities of the Leader(s)

Humility is the hallmark of leaders. "There is no more important attitude to have in ministry." Leading by example in serving one another is the method of leadership. Dependence upon the Holy Spirit for empowerment is the resource of leadership. Flexibility, love, and respect are the qualifying capabilities of leadership.

5.2 Understanding and Respect of Leadership Structure

The core of the Calvary Chapel beliefs is that the Holy Spirit is the leader of the church. God is sovereign and communicates to the church in the Word of God - the Bible. The concept is

that Calvary Chapels are a Theocracy, i.e., God is the head of the church with the Holy Spirit teaching and guiding the church according to God's direction.

The model for the church is provided in the Book of Acts Chapter 2. All church leadership are subject to the Holy Spirit and are responsible to God to lead, love, and tend the group participants, and see that they are well cared for. The Pastor of the church is respected as the primary leader of the church. He is accountable to and supported by the council of Elders. "God's model is that the pastor is ruled by the Lord and aided by the Elders to discover the mind and will of Jesus Christ for His church."

5.3 Empowerment by the Holy Spirit.

"Jesus made three promises to us about the Spirit - He is with you, He shall be in you, and you will receive the power when He comes upon you." "The empowering of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is distinct and separate from the indwelling of the Spirit that takes place at conversion." The Holy Spirit dwells

with a person prior to conversion, convicting him/her of sin and convincing him/her that Jesus is the only answer to dealing with sin. After conversion, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer and provides the power to walk in the Spirit rather than the flesh and to have victory over sin. In addition, a third ministry of the Spirit is when He comes upon the believer bringing an overflow of His power to touch others. Many refer to this as the "baptism of the Spirit."

5.4 Building the Church God's Way.

A casual, relaxed style of ministry is our mode of operation. There is no involvement with spiritual "hype" that tends to play on emotion or fleshly inclinations. Striving to gain favor or fervor only yields the need to strive to maintain that level of favor or fervor.

5.5 Grace upon Grace.

Calvary Chapel believes that none of us would have a chance without God's Grace. We will operate with grace for everyone all the times. Through love and grace, we seek to restore the fallen, forgive as we have been

forgiven, and resist legalism and judgmental attitudes. We choose to err on the side of grace rather than on the side of judgment. We make every effort to avoid polarization on matters that would divide us.

5.6 Priority of the Scriptures

Calvary Chapel endeavors to declare the whole counsel of God. We approach the Word of God as a single unit. We do not highlight portions and exclude others. Book by book, verse by verse expository teaching is a primary characteristic of our collective Bible Study efforts.

5.7 Centrality of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the center of our worship and focus. Our goal is to focus on Jesus and avoid things that draw attention to individuals.

5.8 Eschatology: Rapture of the Church

Calvary Chapel teaches that Jesus is coming soon, without warning, to take His church to be

with Him in heaven. Every generation should presume they are the last. The general term for Jesus taking His church is "The Rapture". Though the forces of the Antichrist are at work in the world today, the presence of the church restrains him. After Jesus takes His church, the Antichrist will be unrestrained, the Tribulation will commence, and God will pour out His wrath on the world. The ensuing second coming of Christ is a separate event in history followed by the judgment of all who have refused the salvation of Christ's atoning work on the cross.

5.9 The Supremacy of Love.

We understand that all our doctrinal orthodoxy and understanding of scripture are worthless without love. It is more important to have the right attitude than to have the right answers. Love must be demonstrated by our own attitudes and actions.

5.10 Striking the Balance

It is important not to divide people over non-essentials. When the bible speaks clearly, we must speak clearly as well. Where it is not clear, we must not become dogmatic. We understand there is room for mystery in the teaching of the Bible. Therefore, we trust that God is sovereign, yet He gives each of us a free will. We trust that each believer is secure in their salvation by faith, yet note that one's salvation is evidenced by their living in accordance with God's commands. We believe in the validity of the Spiritual Gifts and that they can be expressed today, yet understand their expression is to be orderly and certainly in line with the clear teaching of the Scriptures and that excesses and abuse of them is possible.

5.11 Ventures of Faith

God wants us to be a part of what He is doing. He wants to continue His work in and through His people. We are invited to discover what He is doing and enter in to His activity in faith. Seeking an understanding of His desire is the key to successful faith ventures. God will cause His work to accomplish His desires. We should not depend on our

human effort to accomplish results. We also recognize that because God has worked in one way in the past does not imply He will choose to do the same in the future.

Enabling ministries to move through a natural life cycle of birth, life, and death, is God's business. Ours is to seek to follow His lead and enjoy His empowerment to accomplish His intent. "It's always a sign of degeneration when you have to go back to the past to say what God has done, rather than being able to say, 'look at what God is doing today.'" If you venture out with your best ideas and God does not produce results, retreat to discover what God wants. God has given each of us talents; but if we rely only on our human talent, the results will not produce results as God intends. Be led by the Spirit and don't be afraid to follow. Step in faith.

5.12 Questions about the Calvary Chapel Surprise Position on Doctrinal Issues?

Seek the counsel of the Small Group Leadership Team who may decide to refer questions the Council of Elders.

