

## Community Groups—Grounding Growth Principles

### Prayer

#### What it is...

- Asking others in the group to pray for specific things as you go through your week
- Recording prayer requests and following up on them later
- Praying not only for needs but also thanks, celebrations, and salvations
- Personal and group rhythm for the group
- Praying for immediate needs when they come up
- Confession and repentance for/from the sin in our lives

#### What it's not...

- A 45-minute per-person life update time
- Time to gossip about the lives of others
- A box to be checked to close the group
- Only for the leader or co-leader to do
- Isolated to the group meeting time
- A place to complain to others about your circumstances
- Impersonal limited to relatives of relatives of group members

### Scripture

#### What it is...

- A personal rhythm that leads to the growth of others
- Bridge of unity to group participation
- What we gather around during discussion time
- A platform for the group conversation to overflow into other areas of life
- Guide for intentional prayer times
- Publicly read as we sit under its teaching
- Meditated on when we rest in God together

#### What it's not...

- Left out because the sermon or the book we are going through is the focus
- A footnote to conversational dialogue
- Quarantined to only the meeting times
- Optional
- Subjectively interpreted based on our desires
- Leveraged as a weapon or justification for opinions

### Discussing & Applying

#### What it is...

- Starting long before the meeting itself
- Asking follow-up questions and 3-5 questions for depth
- Context for all members to contribute
- A conversation that births good works that God has prepared for us
- Where the text moves from knowledge to wisdom
- Follow up on the previous week's applications
- Personal and intentional
- Time to be encouraged and challenged by what God is doing in others and ourselves

#### What it's not...

- Just reading the sermon questions and moving on
- Waiting for one person to answer, then moving to the next question
- Teaching time for the leader
- A platform for personal pontifications
- 1 person's chance to dominate
- A discussion that leads to knowledge alone
- To remain in the abstract
- To be removed from application to individual lives
- A conversation about everyone else but me

## Identifying & Nurturing Gifts

### What it is...

- Affirming where you see the Lord using others
- Spending time together outside discipling and equipping them
- Leaning into what others do well
- Actively looking for how others are given for the building up of the group
- Providing space for them to use their gifts
- Meeting with others regularly as they develop their gifts
- Releasing others to use their gifts outside of the group

### What it's not...

- Holding tightly to leadership or control
- Only inviting those who are exactly like you or share similar interests
- Going to happen on just the meeting nights
- A passive activity where minimal or no fruitful discussion occurs
- A time to elevate some gifts over other gifts.
- An optional pursuit for some groups and leaders

## Do's & Don'ts for Facilitating

### DO's

- Stress application
- Ask good open questions
- Keep the discussion on track
- Model a depth of vulnerability in sharing
- Create a safe place for discussion
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Pay attention to body language
- Clarify what members are saying
- Depend on the Spirit in responding to questions
- Be okay with silence
- Encourage others to voice their thoughts on each other's responses

### DON'Ts

- Don't lecture about the truth
- Don't center on facts alone
- Don't dominate the time
- Don't answer all of the questions yourself
- Don't stay with information & content alone
- Don't allow criticism, emphasis on wrong answers, or unsolicited advice
- Don't go over the time allotted
- Don't rigidly hold to the provided questions
- Don't respond every time someone speaks