

Care and prayer

I know Jon already said this but thank you guys again for being here and taking time out of your week for us to be able to do a little rallying towards something together.

Y'all know our hope is for LifeGroups to be little Jesus centered families on mission together, scattered all over the Columbia area. And we know that ministry is an 'all of us' project. Ephesians 4 says it's the job of leaders in a church to equip the saints for the work of ministry.

Practically speaking for LifeGroups, this looks like healthy core groups where the weight of ministry leadership is being shared by a number of people instead of a LG leader trying to do everything on their own.

And when this is functioning well, we accomplish two huge things:

1- Everyone grows in maturity which makes room for hospitality. As you take on weight you grow in your spiritual maturity and leadership development. And that means your group is better equipped to welcome in new people and to plant new groups so more people can enjoy all the good that our church family has to offer.

2- Second. When a group leader says they are burned out and need to quit leading, what do you think is the number one reason they give for why they are burned out? Caring for people in their group.

And we want more groups planted in more neighborhoods reaching out to more people. So we don't need leaders finding themselves no longer able to lead because of burnout. So we in the room have a great chance to step up and assist our leaders in the single greatest area of concern and need, to prevent leader burnout and allow for more people to hear about Jesus because we have more groups all over Columbia.

So I would never say that this breakout is more important than the other ones but... _(ツ)_/

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

2 Cor 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

1 Cor 12:25

25 let there be no division in the body, but the members should have the same care for one another.

Gal 6:2

2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

We want to create a culture of care in our groups and we want people to know that they are cared for.

Two parts.

We want taking care of each other to be normal, it's just what the group does.

Second part. We want the people in the group to perceive that they are cared for. We want them to interpret our actions as representing care. That's not as easy as you want it to be. Sometimes we care and do things to show that we care but people do not receive it as such. Everyone in your group has different expectations and criteria by which they will determine if they are cared for. Some people feel cared for when they are pursued. Others feel bothered by that and instead feel cared for when you leave them be.

Let me just give you some ideas on how to attempt to accomplish those goals. I'm gonna give you some ideas just to get your wheels turning. You are gonna take these and make them your own and come up with different ones.

And let me clarify that I'm not talking about crisis care. Crisis care will include your LG Leader and your Coach. What we're talking about here is ongoing, normal care.

Here are some things I would do if this were my core group role.

- During group time, any time someone said anything going on with them, an issue, a circumstance, a sin struggle, a prayer request, a worry, a fear, etc. I'd have a way to jot that down quickly. So once group time is over, I've got a list of things that people mentioned that are going on with them. And that's arguably the most important thing. Everything I'm gonna do is made possible by that list. And I'm gonna try to max it out.

- After group time, I would do a 15 minute text follow up session. And I would send something to each person. Or each couple.

Anything I can highlight as a positive. "It's always better when you're there." "Thanks for that thing you said." "I loved how you responded to Bill when he said that thing he said."

And if someone wasn't there, "hey we missed you tonight. It's never as good when you aren't there." And then I'm gonna consult my list. "And I'm gonna pray for that thing you talked about." or "let me know how that work thing goes on Thursday! I want to get an update." I want them to know they were heard and listened to and are cared for.

During the week, when I prayed for someone about something on my list, I would mention it in groupme. "Hey Bill, just finished praying for you about that situation going on at work. I hope God gives you wisdom to navigate that. Keep us updated on how it's going."

So Bill knows I care about him and prayed for him. That's a win.

And then also, I model for the rest of the group that we check in on each other and pray for each other throughout the week. Try to create a culture.

If it were me, in that 15 minute texting follow up time after your LG meets, I'd also divide out specific prayer requests and follow ups. Remember, we are trying to create a culture where the group cares for each other, the goal is not just that I care. So I would give some assignments.

"Hey, will you make a note to pray for Bill sometime this week...about that work thing he's got going on. And after you do will you let him know you did in GroupMe?"

That way other people are brought in. And I'm not doing all the work. Bill gets cared for, knows he's cared for, and the group gets a model of behavior and I get an indicator as to whether people are actually praying because it gets posted in the groupme for me to be able to see.

Direct communication here. And small sized requests. "Hey would you be willing to set a reminder in your phone for Wednesday to check in with Bill about that work thing he mentioned during group time? I want to make sure he knows we care about him and that someone reaches out to him midweek. "

Then at group time the next week, I have my list to glance back at and ask for updates, so that no one's concerns fall through the cracks. Worst case, there isn't time during group so afterwards when I'm texting I say "hey I hate that we didn't have time to get an update from you on that thing you mentioned last week. What is the latest on that?"

If time...narrate.