**Group Life Leader Training Brunch**

 **January 26, 2019**

 **Let’s Get Practical!!**

**I. Goal: Making groups more personal; a place where members feel safe, comfortable/authentic and empowered.**

Let’s break this down:

**Safe:** A safe environment is one where participants feel able to share (over time) at an intimate level with other group members without fear of judgment or other repercussion.

**Comfortable/Authentic:** Being authentic is where a group member can be themselves – funny, outgoing, reserved, caring, etc. There are no stereotypes. A person doesn’t have to portray a certain type of personality or “religious” style to please/impress others.

**Empowered:** Empowerment suggests that, as a group member, you can comfortably take on any role that seems appropriate for you as part of the group’s needs. In some cases, you may lead a discussion or offer personal care to another individual. Or, you may feel “empowered” to offer leader feedback or suggestions for group activities.

Key point: It is the job of the leader to foster this environment for all group members and to be sensitive to those who have not experienced the results of these group goals.

**II. Practical “belonging” methods for leaders to consider:**

**Creating intimacy/deeper relationships**

1. **Sharing spiritual journeys.** Create intentional time during your meetings to allow one individual to share their walk with God. Give that person a heads up that you’ll be calling on them. Move it around with other group members (and be sure they are comfortable sharing).
2. **Affirmation time.** Select an individual to be affirmed by other group members at a meeting and have the group offer words of love and support about that person. It could be a personal experience they have had or something they have seen in their interaction with others.
3. **Consider group activities outside of your normal meeting structure.** This could take the form of fellowship nights, fun outings, ladies/guys nights out, one-on-one times for coffee/catch-up, intentional nurturing activities (e.g., text messages, cards, phone calls, etc.).
4. **Learn from the successes of other groups.** Establish a working relationship with another group leader and share experiences and challenges on a regular basis. Don’t wait for the “once a year” training session to interact. Put positive initiatives into action; don’t be afraid to copy good ideas.
5. **The Meal that Binds.** Many groups begin their meetings over a meal. There is nothing like “breaking bread” with others as a way to break down relational barriers and creating more intimacy.
6. **Be realistic.** Remember that you cannot necessarily be close personal friends with everyone in your group, especially if your group is large. But, you **can** create and nurture a personal group culture; one that moves from “social acquaintances” to “personal friends” following Jesus together.