

Emmanuel Baptist Small Groups Ministry Handbook



The Vision, Purpose, and Core Values of Small Groups @ Emmanuel

Purpose:

To make lifelong followers of Jesus Christ in all nations, who are living obediently, growing in maturity, bearing fruit, and being transformed into Christlikeness

Our goal is to make disciples. Our purpose is to relationally connect with people in such a way that it encourages them to be *growing* in their relationship with Jesus Christ, continuing to take steps forward in their faith relationship with Christ. We want to see people demonstrating greater faith and living in greater surrender to the will of their heavenly Father.

We believe that Small groups provide the best context for genuine discipleship to happen, through spiritual growth in Biblical community. Sustained life change takes place best in the context of intentional relationships where people are personally challenged and encouraged in their relationship with God and others.

Our Core Values:

Studying & Applying God's Word

(Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 4:2)

Prayer

(Acts 2:42-43; Matthew 18:18-20)

Authentic Biblical Relationships

(Acts 2: 42-47; Hebrews 10:25;)

- Genuine and mutual care. (Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:10-15)
 - Spiritual Accountability (James 5:16; I John 1:7-9)
- Encouragement for Spiritual growth (Hebrews 10:25; Ephesians 4:13; Rom 8:29-30; Rom 6:22; 1 Thess 4:3)

Serving God, the Church, and one another through Spiritual gifts

(Mathew 10:5; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; 1 Peter 4:7-10)

Leadership Development

(2 Tim 2:2; Titus 2:3-7)

Outreach & Multiplication:

(Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:47)

Our Vision: To see **every believer** at Emmanuel participating in a small group growing in their discipleship with Jesus; experiencing biblical community; being known and cared for; and Serving.

The Qualifications of a Small Group Leader

(Exodus 18:17-23; Acts 6:3; 1Timothy 3:8-10)

1 – Character.

A small group Leader must be a person of Christian Character who has integrity and a good reputation. Someone who is committed to living an exemplary life of Christlikeness, who is growing in their relationship with God. Someone who loves the Word of God, a person of Prayer. (1 Thessalonians 5:22-24; 1 Timothy 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:14-16)

2 – Commitment.

A small group leader needs to be committed to their group, to the church and to small group ministry. They must be able and willing to give the time and effort to make small group ministry effective: prayer, preparation for bible study, following up on group members who are away or have needs. (Acts 20:17-24; Hebrews 13:7)

3 – Competence.

A small group leader needs to be competent in what they do. Able to lead small group meetings, from prayer times to bible studies. Able to lead a small group in vision and direction. Able to lead members into deeper relationships with each other. Know your strengths and weaknesses, work with them. Willing to be trained, to learn more and committed to grow in their abilities. (Philippians 3:12-17)

4 – Chemistry

A small group leader needs to be relational, and needs to be able to relationally connect with the members of their small group, carefully handling any relational issues and dynamics that may arise. They need to have a caring heart towards others, and need to strive to develop and maintain a compassionate heart for those they serve, knowing that often people don't care how much you know till they know that you care. Setting the example in caring in both word and deed. (Matthew 9:35-38)

5 – Connected

A small group Leader must be connected to the body. A committed follower of Christ and a committed member of Emmanuel, committed to the purpose, vision and mission of the church and small group ministry.

LEADERSHIP

The Role of a Small Group or Bible Study Leader

1. Provide Leadership for Your small group

The small group leader gives leadership to the small group! Leading the small group through the small group meetings (bible study, prayer times.) tactfully, effectively, and on time. Leading the small group through decisions (ie: service project, where to meet, small group growth...). Sometimes dealing with small group issues or conflicts that arise. (Don't be afraid to include the Leadership team in this!). Leading your small group through growth and multiplication. This doesn't mean that you have to do it all! Delegate small group responsibilities to others gifted and qualified in your small group!

2. Provide Care for Your small group members.

Shepherding.

The small group leader is the Shepherd of a small group of people. It extends the Pastoral ministry of the church. The small group leader provides comfort through trials and tragedy, counsel in times of need, encouragement and biblical affirmation, practical help and correction. Following up on specific needs or concerns that arise. Checking up on members who are absent. Building genuine, caring relationships with each small group member.

3. Develop Leaders

The small group leader should always be looking to develop the next small group leader in your group! Appoint an assistant facilitator in your group. Look for people who are faithful, available, and teachable. Allow them to lead and test their gifts. Encourage and mentor them. Replace yourself!

4. Personal Leadership Development.

We want to provide leadership development and encouragement through 3-4 Small Group Facilitator meetings a year. We expect our small group facilitators to value and prioritize these and be committed to attending them. (Usually they are in September, January, June)

leadership essentials

Stay Connected

You can't lead others down a path that you are not on. You can't help others grow in their walk with Christ if YOU are not growing in your walk with Him. Only through your personal walk with Christ can you bear fruit and help others grow spiritually. What are you doing to grow spiritually? What is the next step in your own personal walk with Christ?

Cultivate Relationships

Spiritual growth is relational, it is about growing in our relationship with God and our relationship with others. Spiritual growth is growing in our love for God and our love for others. In small groups we are trying to facilitate relational growth on deeper levels. Cultivating things like empathy and vulnerability. As leaders we must set the example and lead the way. Look for ways to intentionally grow your relationship with each of you your small group members, even ones you might not be naturally drawn to, and help them grow in their relationship with each other.

Promote Participation

Your job is NOT to do everything! Good leaders delegate and look for ways to involve everyone. Helping your group members get involved and serve one another helps them grow spiritually and take ownership of the group. Think about some of the things you can delegate in your group such as hosting, service projects, prayer, worship, snacks. Make sure each person is involved in the group in some way. Always be asking yourself what is God up to in EACH of the lives of my small group members and how can the group support that.

Provide Care

Small groups need to work to provide care for each small group member. Develop an atmosphere of caring within your group but also intentionally provide care when members of your small group experience pain or difficulties. Stay aware of what is going on in each members life, especially pivotal circumstances. Follow up on prayer requests and needs that are shared. Request updates. Ask how you can help. Try to be a first responder when someone is in crisis. Don't do it alone, delegate it to others who may be gifted. When needed, defer your small group members to a counsellor or to a pastor, who can help them.

Serve Together

We are called to serve. We serve God when we serve others. We grow spiritually when we serve. It is also important for the church to be seen in the community, making the church a positive influence. Look for ways to make a difference in the lives of those in need or facing difficult circumstances. When we serve as a small group it encourages the members of our small groups to grow spiritually, to see needs, and to love others. Serving together will also grow the relationships within your group. BUT, It will never be convenient or easy, it will require sacrifice and intentionality. Look for ways to intentionally serve others and be intentional about planning serving opportunities for your group

Replace Yourself

Identify and prepare others for possible leadership and multiplication, by mentoring and passing down skills and knowledge in small group ministry. Give others the opportunity to practice or test their gifts. All good leaders develop good leaders, they replace themselves. Moses & Joshua, Elijah & Elisha, Paul & Timothy, Jesus and His disciples. Look for those who may have the passion, competence, humility, and spiritual maturity to be a small group leader. Invite them into leadership. Share small group tasks and responsibilities. Leaders who are developed by other leaders make the best group leaders. Multiplying small group leaders will multiply discipleship, spiritual growth and the church.

Suggested Small Group Format & Outline

Here is an outline of a typical small group meeting with the KEY ELEMENTS that we believe are important!

Before the Meeting: Prepare & Pray! Go through material; set up small group area; pray for your small group members.

Welcome & Mingle / “Hosting” (10-20 min)

- *Get people connected and feeling welcome
- *This helps to allow the building of relationships

Bible Study & Discussion Time (45 Min – Hour)

- **Get in the Word.** It is the most valuable thing you have!
- We can recommend and provide material for you! Lots of great Video curriculum with great teaching and discussion guides provided.
- Allow for both **teaching time** and for **discussion time**. Allow people to wrestle through what they have heard and begin to apply it to their lives.

Prayer & Share Time / Accountability (30 - 45min)

- *This takes time and creativity! Find ways to get everyone involved.
- *Split into groups. Men & Women, accountability partners.
- *Regularly pray also for the church with information provided.
- *This is often where real ministry takes place.

Fellowship / Ministry Time (15-20 min)

- *This allows time for people to build relationships with one another
- *This provides a time to perhaps address a question raised in the study or to minister to someone in need.
- *Make sure to not overstay your welcome at your host's!

After the Meeting: You may want to make notes of things to do differently next time, prayer request or concerns to follow up with during the week.

***EACH OF THESE is a critical element of a small group meeting! No doubt some you will be naturally bent toward some elements more than others, the more they are kept in balance the most effective a small group ministry can be!**

***2- 3 hours is a good average amount time to run a small group well. We don't suggest anything less than 2 hours, anything more than 3 hours.**

***Every 6-8 weeks take time to SERVE as a group somewhere in the church or in the community. Take a few minutes each small group meeting to be thinking ahead to this. Give someone this project to lead.**

***Try including sharing each other's testimonies as well throughout the year, this can be a powerful thing.**

***THE FIRST WEEK!**

The first Night Your Small Group meets you should include a couple elements:

- **A Mixer** - Time for everyone to introduce themselves / Ice breaker (Fun game; answer questions ie: favorite food...)
- **Going over an outline / format of the small group meeting:** start time, end time, elements.
- **Go over the Vision, purposes, and core values of Small group ministry.** (Make sure they catch the vision of Why we are doing what we are doing!)
- **Go over Small Group Covenant, Values, & Expectations** – The Small Group Covenant that establishes some further ground rules or “Values” for the small group (ie: confidentiality, honesty, vulnerability, respect, commitment; ect...)



Emmanuel's Open & Closed Small Group Model

Our small group model at Emmanuel is an open and closed model. As a new small group starts, it starts as an open group for a time to give it time to adjust and settle. This often takes 2 -12 months. The group will work together and with the Small Group Ministry leadership in becoming established. Once it is established we recommend that it moves to a closed group. This will give the group time to build meaningful relationships through which spiritual growth can take place. It provides a predictable small-group environment where participants can experience authentic community and spiritual growth. We don't want our groups to have revolving doors. We believe relationships take time to form. Closed groups lead to the abc's of community: accountability, belonging, and Care. Groups that constantly change seldom experience authentic community. The group should stay aware to the possibility that God may bring someone along to the group, but only on the agreement of the whole group. Groups are will be challenged to multiply, usually in eighteen to twenty-four months. Every living thing, every group has a life cycle. Every group eventually comes to an end. A group can plan to end and have something to show for it, or they can let their group die a long, slow death.

Strategy for Small Group Ministry GROWTH: Multiplication

The spiritual paradox. Small groups ultimately do not exist for themselves. Groups **MUST** expand and multiply so that others can be connected to others and experience what small group ministry provides.

Living things grow. The church and small groups are a living thing. If they do not grow, they become stagnant, self-centered, withdrawn and die. The church must always be committed to growth.

The optimal size of a small group is 8-12 people. The level of care and overall effectiveness of a small group often will diminish greatly when the group gets too large. A loss of intimacy, caring, sharing and involvement happens which produces frustrated members who drift away from involvement until suddenly the group grows smaller again, but for the wrong reasons.

Small groups must have a strategy and commitment to growth and reproduction. These are our strategies for small group ministry growth:

1. **MULTIPLICATION!** One of the most effective ways of small group ministry growth is multiplication! To see small groups grow to the point of becoming two! Be preparing your group for this from the beginning! Usually this takes 1-3 years. Consider whether your small group is ready for this! Be talking about and praying about multiplication.
2. **Leadership Development!** (2 Tim2:2) Small group ministry is the ideal place for leadership development! Always be looking for those with the skills and gifts to be small group facilitators. Find and appoint an apprentice leader as soon as possible. Share group leadership with them. Encourage them. Mentor them! Someone who has showed Character, Competence, Commitment, and Chemistry. Let your group know at some point that someone is being trained to be a small group leader. Eventually your group can multiply with that person starting a new group.
3. **Make it known!** Make the goal of growth known! Present it from the beginning! Include it in your prayer times! Eventually set a Date.
4. **Celebrate it!** When the time comes, celebrate it! Plan a party!



Small Group Growth & Multiplication

Multiplying small groups is Hard. What makes multiplication of existing groups challenging?

- It can **disrupt relationships** that have been developed over time. It takes time and effort to develop trusted relationships through which ministry can happen.
- Thought of Splitting up or changing something that seems to be so good, beneficial is hard. You can and will lose certain group dynamics. Not every group experience will be the same. There are different seasons in small group ministry.
- **Change is challenging.** No one really likes change. (That is why many churches die before they change).
- The **Availability of new leaders** and Host Homes. Multiplying small group ministry requires a lot of leaders and leadership development, which is not always easy to find.

So Why do we need to Multiply?

- **Experience** shows that for the most part a group of 8-12 is the ideal size of a small group. When it gets bigger you begin lose participation and intimacy, small group members begin to pull back, fall through the cracks and not be cared for.
- **Stagnation** that happens when a group becomes self seeking, self focused, separated from those outside. New members or the intention of growth and multiplication can bring life, focus and vision to a group. God gave us community for a reason that transcends the “little corner of heaven” created in group life. If your group does not harness the power of biblical community to build the kingdom with new believers and new leaders, it will slowly die.
- **More people need what you have.** Every believer needs to be connected to the body, to experience becoming known and knowing others, being cared for, and growing spiritually. Biblical community is not ordinary, its extraordinary! People need it! The goal is to create a culture in the whole church of biblical fellowship.
- **Living things grow.** Things that don't grow, die. Churches are living things! The Church should NEVER live to stop growing! Small groups are the church, like the cells of the body. Our mission is to lead people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe that life change happens best in the context of small groups. We need more small groups!
- **The Biblical example and mandate** – Moses & Joshua, Elijah & Elisha, Jesus and His disciples. Paul. 2 Timothy 2:1-2; Ephesians 4:11-13. The goal of every good biblical leader is to replace yourself. Success is not merely doing ministry. but handing off the ministry and the responsibility for it to those behind us.

- **Leadership development.** Small group multiplication provides a great opportunity and tool to develop leaders and shepherds in the body of Christ.

How do we Multiply Small Groups?

- **Prepare you group!** The goal and reality of multiplication must be understood and the vision explained from the beginning. It is In our small group covenant. The Leader needs to express it from time to time. Every small group needs to be praying and thinking for growth and multiplication.
- **Understand what season your group is in.** Are you just starting? Getting established? Open verses closed. Close to death. Consider the time of the year (Sept – Jan getting established/Launch new group; Jan – May growing & developing apprentice; May – August – preparing for multiplication)
- **Identify and Develop an apprentice leader.** Every group leader should be identifying possible new small group leaders and have a designated apprentice who is being trained and mentored. Start by **praying!** Ask for God’s help and leading. Talk to your small group Ministry leader or Pastor. Approach a potential apprentice, share with them the vision and purpose of small group ministry. Allow the apprentice to try leading aspects of the small group. Mentor the apprentice through it. Show them how you prepare a study, or a small group night. Take them to visit a small group member. Meet with them before the small group meeting to pray for your members.
- **Small Group apprentice training.** The small group ministry team will work to also help train an apprentice when the time is right. One on one training and small group leaders training. Feel free to invite potential small group apprentices to small group leader training meetings.
- **When the time is right,** introduce the start of the multiplication process. **Establish the new small group leader. Set a date** (I recommend Start of new ministry year in September). Decide whether the new or established small group leader will stay with the established group. Allow **small group members** to begin to pray and consider whether they will stay with the existing group or go with the new one.
- **Celebrate.** Before the launch of the new small group, take time to celebrate. Have a party. Pray for the new and old group.

What are the Qualities of a Small Group Apprentice & Leader?

Commitment, Character, Competence, Chemistry, Connected 2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- **Faithfulness** – consistent, reliable, trustworthy, believing,
- **Blameless** – nothing in life that they could be condemned of
- **Faithful to their family**
- **Self controlled** – temperate, safe, sound, not greedy, gentle
- **Respectable** – modest, good behaviour,
- **Hospitable** – good to others, generous, friendly, caring, gentle, relational
- **Able to teach** – fairly good knowledge of what they believe, express it well, not quarrelsome, teachable
- **Spiritual Maturity** – not a new believer, humble, dependant on God.

The Apprenticeship Process

We divide this process into three phases: **observation, preparation, and multiplication**. These phases and key steps within each phase are identified below.

Phase 1: *Observation*

During the observation phase, much of your focus will be on creating an environment where your group members experience authentic community. But you will also want to be intentional about observing your group members with an eye for identifying your apprentice.

How do I identify my apprentice?

In looking for a potential apprentice, it is important to remember that you are not looking for someone who can lead a group tomorrow. You are looking for a teachable group member who has the potential to be a great group leader in the future. We have identified five C's that will assist you in prayerfully considering who in your group may be a good apprentice leader. Commitment, Character, Competence, Chemistry, Connected.

Commitment

- Is potential apprentice committed to your current group? Are they faithful? Are they involved? Do they have the commitment that will be required to be a small group leader?

Character

- First and foremost, it is important to determine if your potential apprentice has established a personal relationship with Christ. Can your potential apprentice point to a time when he or she established a relationship with Christ, and has he or she been growing in a relationship with Christ for over two years?
- Recognizing that character is what makes a leader worth following, is your potential apprentice someone worth following?

- Are you comfortable with your potential apprentice's moral authority to model for other group members what it looks like to be in a growing relationship with Christ?

Competence

- Is your potential apprentice someone who is teachable and able to learn the skills necessary to Does your potential apprentice have the relational skills to effectively lead a group at some point in the future?
- create a predictable environment where authentic community and spiritual growth can occur?
- Have you seen your potential apprentice display leadership skills (i.e., facilitating group discussions, planning socials, providing care, etc.) in your group?

Chemistry

- your potential apprentice have the relational skills to effectively lead a group at some point in the future?
- Do they relate well with a variety of types in your group. Are they kind, caring, gentle, compassionate,
- Have you been able to connect relationally with your potential apprentice?
- Have you seen your potential apprentice connect with the other members of your group?
- Are you comfortable with your potential apprentice's ability to relate to others?

Connected

- Is your potential apprentice a regular attender of our church?
- Is your potential apprentice committed to the mission and strategy of our church?

How do I develop my apprentice?

Once you have identified your apprentices, consider some "best practices" that can help you develop them effectively. If apprenticing is a key element of our multiplication and leader development models, then it follows that we should take a strategic approach to apprentice development. Specifically, we will look at four practices:

- Recruiting
- Modeling
- Involving
- Connecting

We acknowledge that no two apprenticeships will look exactly the same because of the uniqueness of the personalities involved. There is no magic formula for developing your apprentice, and naturally you will want to tailor your approach to fit your personality and that of your apprentice, but the tips and strategies that follow can guide you through the process.

Phase 2: Preparation

Most of the development your apprentice will receive during the group life cycle will happen during the preparation phase. While you should be modeling group leadership and involving others in the group throughout the group's life, during the preparation phase you will shift your focus to specifically involving your apprentice and intentionally modeling specific attitudes and skills. This shift in focus begins with recruiting your apprentice.

Recruiting

How is recruiting part of development? Doesn't the development process begin after you have identified and recruited your apprentice? On the contrary, how you recruit your apprentice sets the tone for the rest of the development period.

Why did Matthew follow Jesus? Because Jesus invited him. Jesus didn't ask for volunteers to be his disciples—he picked them. He made a general call for people to believe in and follow him, but he handpicked his successors.

The act of inviting people to leadership—if done well—can communicate that they are valued and respected, a message that creates a solid foundation for their development. Consider the following invitations to leadership:

"The Groups Director at North Point said I needed to have an apprentice, so I put your name down. You'd be kind of like the assistant group leader. Whaddya think?"

Versus:

"We've talked about this group multiplying into two new groups next spring. As I think about that, I can really see you leading one of those groups; you really 'get' what groups are about, and I think you bring a lot to the table. So I'd like you to consider being the apprentice leader for the duration of this group, to prepare you to lead your next group."

The invitation is also your first big opportunity to cast vision for what apprenticing and group leadership are all about. Share the passion you have for your role and why you do what you do. Share with them why you think their gifts are well suited to the role. Most potential apprentices are going to have some reservations about becoming group leaders; chances are they don't feel qualified to lead a group. Your invitation is an opportunity to address their concerns, while also building them up, and it also provides a natural segue into communicating the expectations for both group leaders and apprentices.

To a large degree, their understanding of what group leaders are supposed to be is governed by what they see you doing. If the two of you are gifted in different ways, and they don't feel like they would be good at the things they see you do well, they may not think they're well suited for group leadership. This gives you a great opportunity to discuss what a group leader is and is not. Once they understand the role, they may still be a little bit overwhelmed, but at least they will know what is expected of them.

Now, if you have taken this strategic view of recruitment, you will have begun the development process by:

- Affirming their value and leadership skills;
- Casting vision for both the group leader and apprentice roles; and
- Communicating what is expected of them as apprentices.

And if they have accepted your invitation to leadership, they will be ready to embrace the rest of the development process.

Modeling

The apprentice's understanding of what group leadership is all about is based largely on what the apprentice sees the leader doing. This dynamic can be leveraged to build your apprentice's group leadership skills if you are strategic and intentional about the way you lead. There are two critical elements to strategic modeling: demonstration and explanation.

Demonstration is fairly straightforward; it's simply showing them how to lead by watching you. Everything you do as a group leader—the way you lead discussions, how you demonstrate authenticity, how often you interact with group members outside the group meeting—communicates a lesson about group leadership. The key to effective demonstration is to think through what lesson you want to communicate and act accordingly. For example, it may be your natural tendency to allow the discussion time to run long; but since you want to demonstrate the value of adhering to the guidelines in the Covenant, you make a conscious effort to wrap up the discussion at 8:45, even though there are four discussion questions you didn't get to ask.

Explanation involves directly communicating with your apprentice about the principle that you are modeling. For example, if you want to model a sensitive response to tough questions, you may want to say to your apprentice, "Tomorrow night's discussion is probably going to provoke some emotional response from Kelly, since she recently lost her stepmom who wasn't a Christian. I'd like you to listen to how I respond to her comments and questions, and you and I can talk later about why I responded like I did." This helps the apprentice pay particular attention not only to what you do, but also to your method or approach, and it allows you to focus attention on the specific skill or principle that you are modeling. And by making it a priority to talk about what was or will be modeled, you create opportunities for the apprentice to ask questions or provide feedback.

In order to put the demonstration/explanation strategy into practice, you'll need to know what it is you want to model. One way to do this is to periodically spend some time focusing on self-assessment. Ask yourself what you have learned about group leadership that would be helpful to your apprentice and how you might model that. Some group leadership practices you may want to model are:

- **Facilitating discussion** — in particular, how to listen more than you talk; how to engage the introverts or rein in the dominant personalities.
- **Investing in group members** — spend extra relational time with your apprentices and pray both with them and for them.
- **Choosing an apprentice** — ask them whom in the group they would ask to apprentice.

Involving

Simply modeling—even intentional, strategic modeling—is not enough to prepare your apprentices for group leadership. In order to build both their competence and their confidence, they will need to practice leading a group. They will need opportunities to

put into practice what they have learned through your modeling. And the best way to prepare them is to actively involve them in the leadership of your group. Here are some time-tested tips for involving your apprentices:

- ***Start small*** — The life cycles of most groups provide numerous opportunities for your apprentices to take on leadership responsibilities. You can start by asking them to take the lead of a specific area or project, such as: planning a social, leading a discussion, or leading the men or women through their gender's prayer time.
- ***Build up*** — As they show they're ready, invite them to play an increased role in leading the group. You might give them the chance to run the entire group meeting instead of just one part. Present them with the opportunity to direct the group through a key discussion or transition, such as reviewing the group Covenant, selecting the next curriculum, or discussing next steps toward group multiplication. Involve them in major decisions or conflict resolution, as appropriate.
- ***Provide and invite feedback*** — As they take on responsibility, give them feedback on how they're doing (make sure that you give them more affirmation than criticism). Just as important, invite them to give you feedback. Ask them how you did; what went well, and how you could have done it better.
- ***Encourage training*** — Make sure your apprentices are invited to training events and encourage them to attend with you.

For many group leaders, involving their apprentices is the most challenging part of the apprenticing process, because they feel a tremendous sense of ownership of and responsibility for their groups, and they are hesitant to entrust that responsibility to someone else. The key is to remember that success is not just a job well done or more people under your care; success is another competent leader who is ready to take your place.

Phase 3: *Multiplication*

The final phase of the apprenticeship process is the multiplication phase. The last third of the group life cycle is a significant time in the life of your group because successful multiplication requires some advanced planning and intentionality. It's particularly significant for your apprentices because that's the time when the idea of leading their next group begins to solidify in their minds. Since planning for multiplication means planning for two or more future groups, your apprentices will need to be on board and intimately involved with that planning.

Finally, as your group moves into the final third of its life and your multiplication date approaches, follow up with both your director and your apprentice. Confirm that he is taking the necessary steps to move the apprentice toward group leadership and ask if there's any way you can help.

By making a commitment to identifying and developing an apprentice—in effect, replacing yourself—you are playing a significant part in raising up the next generation of leaders and ensuring that there will always be a place for those who want to connect in a community.

Small Group Covenant, Values & Expectations

A Small group doesn't belong to the leader, it belongs to God and to each member. Small groups don't succeed unless everyone is committed to the same vision, purpose and values together. We challenge each person to commit to these values and expectations:

Purpose - The primary purpose of small groups at Emmanuel is Discipleship: To make lifelong followers of Jesus Christ in all nations, who are living obediently, growing in maturity, bearing fruit, and being transformed into Christlikeness.

Commitment - Making Small Group meetings a priority, doing my best to attend regularly and be on time.

Participation - Coming to Small Group meetings prepared and ready to participate, opening my life to others, being honest and transparent but without disrupting or monopolizing the time and attention of others. Using my gifts and abilities to contribute to the group as needed.

Openness, Transparency, & Unity - Creating a safe place for each member to share with openness, honesty and transparency in mutual respect and love. Accepting others and doing my best to contribute to the unity of the group and church, building others up, loving and forgiving others, and working through any conflict, being constructive and not destructive.

Relationships – Being committed to building biblical relationships with other believers where I and others can be known and cared for.

Confidentiality - Maintaining confidentiality of the personal information that is shared. Avoiding gossip and slander. Understanding that my Small Group leader may contact a Pastor if there is a situation that he/she doesn't know how to handle, where a person is being harmed, or if there is serious ongoing unrepentant sin.

Accountability & Spiritual Growth - Coming with the purpose to learn and apply Gods word, and develop relationships for the goal of spiritual growth and maturity, striving to help one another take the next step in our spiritual growth and development and allowing others to hold me accountable for growing spiritually and living a life that honors God.

Caring – To do my part to care for others in my group, to help meet their needs with the love of Christ.

Outreach & Multiplication - Committed to seeing our group work together to reach out to others in and outside the church. Being open to new members, as it grows, being willing to multiply a new group when the time is right to allow others to experience biblical community.

Show up...Join In...Be Real

Small Group Essential Elements

“Hosting”

Who should be the Host?

You may want to be both a facilitator and Host, however it may be easier to find someone else the group willing to host! Finding someone with the gift of Hospitality would be best. You can even share the hosting responsibilities.

Consider The Area of Hospitality!

This involves everything that works to make your small group members feel loved, welcome, comfortable, safe. Create a comfortable environment for spiritual growth, intimate fellowship and transformation! That we suggest the Home!

- Make it feel welcome and comfortable. Consider things like background music, lighting, and having food or drink available.
- Get rid of distractions! Phone, kids, animals.
- Make sure everything works! DVD. Television.

Its all about relationships!

Building good relationships with your guests is crucial!

- Learn their names.
- Greet them warmly.
- Learn everything you can about their family, work, lives.
- Help build the relationships BETWEEN your guests! Introduce them to each other. Help them find common ground and connections with each other.
- Be sensitive for those who seem to be struggling to get connected.

Prayer

Pray for your small group members...The intercessor role

We must understand the spiritual battle at work in the lives of your small group members! Pray by name for each member of your group on a weekly basis. If you want to see transformation, you will have to ask God for it.

Having a Prayer time as a small Group...

Next to the lesson and discussion, the group prayer time is the most vital part of a small group ministry! The Prayer time can develop the caring for one another aspect of your group, as well as the avenue by which you really will get to know one another in an intimate way. Here are a few tips to make the most of your small group prayer time:

1. Keep the prayer time focused on group members, not individuals outside the group. This is not the church prayer meeting time. This is also not the time to “talk” about others. This is the time to meet the intimate needs and concerns of the people in your group. They will be challenged to be real and honest about the struggles and needs of their own lives.
2. We will provide a list of Church wide prayer requests to each group and do ask that each group is praying for the church and key church concerns.
3. Enforce and remind of confidentiality! Your small group members need to feel safe enough to share their personal requests. They will never be real or honest about the struggles and concerns in their lives unless they feel safe and can trust others.
4. Encourage and give every member an opportunity to share a request. If there is a member who is not participating, simply ask a simple question like is there anything happening in the week ahead that we could pray for? But don't force the issue! You many need to confront someone away from the group who is over dominating the prayer time.
5. Don't try to fix the problem! This is a time to pray for one another. Avoid the urge as a small group facilitator to offer your solution to every prayer request that comes up! (That will probably happen naturally after the prayer time)
6. Ask people to pray for 1 or 2 items, not for all as to give everyone a chance to pray. This avoids really long prayers by individuals and also making others feel like there is nothing else to pray for!
7. As the Facilitator close in prayer. Pray for the prayer items not prayed for.
8. Be creative. Use different ways to involve everyone, ie: everyone prays for the person on their right; break into smaller groups; Individual quiet prayer; ACTS (Adoration, confession, thanksgiving; supplication)
9. Keep Track of the Prayer requests! A list, a Journal, Email...

10. Follow up prayer requests! Depending on the nature of the prayer request, look for an opportunity to follow it up by giving a call during the week, a hospital visit, meeting a simple need.
11. Lead out in being authentic and real with your struggles and sin, which will provide the context for others to appropriately share their concerns and issues.

Accountability

James 5:16; I John 1:7-9

A primary goal of small group ministry is sanctification. God has called us each to be conformed to the image of Christ. One can acquire anything in solitude except character. God uses people in three ways – to reveal our sin, to help us to take action against our sin, and to walk with us in our struggle against sin.

Look for ways to incorporate this into your small group time. Using during prayer time is good. Maybe divide up into smaller groups, same gender. Develop accountability partners within your small group that meet outside small group time once a week or every other week.

Caring for One another

Acts 2:41-47; Romans 12:10-15; Galatians 6:2; James 2:16

One of the key values and goals of biblical fellowship is to develop care for each other in the small group.

- 1. Comfort those who need comforting.** Ease the struggles and grief's of those in the group. It could be trials, tragedy, disappointments or just a bad day. Just be there. Listen. Weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Pray for each other. Be a compassionate shepherd
- 2. Mentor those who need Mentoring.** Sometimes those in your group need wisdom and insight for experience that you or another small group member has gained. Do this CAUTIOUSLY! Only mentor when you feel led. Do it with gentleness and humility. Do it with great listening! One on one same gender or as couples is probably the best.
- 3. Encourage those who need encouragement.** There will times when your small group members get discouraged. Look for ways to encourage them. To give them hope, to spur them on, to inspire them. Offer scripture. Offer appreciation and expressions of affirmation.
- 4. Help those who need help.** In some situations, words alone can't meet the need. Sometime there will be the need to help physically or materially. Meals, work projects, financial help, vehicle rides. Do this cautiously and prayerfully.
- 5. Recommend counseling to those who need greater counsel.** We have a relationship with Shalem Counselling services which can offer professional counselling to those in need in our church. Talk to Shawn, Rachel, Dawn or Bob If needed.

Bible Study & Discussion

Be Prepared

It is important to do what you can to be as prepared as you can for each lesson. Review any material ahead of time. Think through your questions, where you want then to go, the key points you want your group to get!

If you're watching a Video or listening to Audio, Take Notes

Take Notes as you watch the Video. Specify things that grab your attention that you would like to talk about! GIVE YOUR SMALL GROUP MEMBERS paper and pens/pencils to take notes also!

The Opening Question is Key

The opening question is key for your discussion time, and it is especially critical in the first two or three lessons. You want your guests to look forward to the dialogue, instead of feeling threatened by it. The opening question should put them at ease and invite them to participate. Here are some examples of how you may do this: "What really spoke to you or challenged you or stuck out to you?"

Give Them Time to Respond

Now, this next point is **critical**, because the room may get silent. And YOU, as the host, will feel threatened by that silence ... even 2 seconds of "dead air" can make you feel like "the discussion time is failing!" You will have an urge to jump in and break the silence and "save" the discussion time. DON'T DO THAT! You will unwittingly "train" your guests to remain silent. They will learn that they don't need to talk, because their host will do it for them. Sometimes the discussion will be immediate and explosive, but sometimes the Holy Spirit is working and needs time. So, plan on **giving them time**. For the early lessons, while your group is getting to know each other and to become comfortable with each other, there may be a few moments of uneasy silence. If you get to the point where you just can't stand it, then say something like this: "If you are waiting for me to break this silence, I'm not going to do it." This will usually break the tension and bring some laughter

Do Not Be Anxious

Don't be anxious. You are going to find that this will become a most delightful time. Make sure you are **praying about the discussion time before** your group meets. Ask the Lord to open up your group and especially pray for those who have been silent, that they will feel comfortable and begin to join the conversation.

Dealing with those who are domineering

Pray that the Lord will give them sensitivity for others. If it persists, you will need to have an honest discussion with them privately to talk about what you are trying to achieve and ask them to help you by allowing others opportunity to share. They probably don't like silence, either, and feel that they are the ones who can "save" the day.

Quiet, non participating Guests

If you have small groups members who aren't participating, that's ok. Give them time to be comfortable. But sometimes what they need is a little bit of prodding. Don't be afraid to gently ask them what they thought or if there something that they thought good, interesting or helpful. Don't force the issue, but don't afraid of inviting people into the conversation.

Check out the questions ahead of time

Don't feel like you have to "plow through" and get all the questions done. You know your group better than the author of your discussion; you know how much time you have. Decide ahead of time what questions are best, what are relative, what questions will cause people to interact with the a material and apply it to their lives. Even write your own questions.

Don't give in to the urge to "Preach" or to "Teach"

Your role as the Facilitator is not be to do the teaching or the preaching! The best way for your group to learn and grow in the small group is through them discovering truth on their own! Let everyone be involved! Let everyone work through the material together. Let everyone get involved! Allow for discussion.

Be Gentle and Understanding

Be prepared! You may hear and see some different reactions to what your small group members are learning and discovering, and wrestling through. You may hear discussion you don't necessarily agree with. Respond carefully, with Gentleness and understanding, ESPECIALLY if you have new believers or non Christians involved. Some people may respond defensively out of conviction.

Stay on Track

You want to keep the discussion on track to the topic at hand! Make sure that you are gentle and tactful, not making members feel like their input is unimportant, or that you are not caring about their input. But avoid drifting into debates, storytelling, and getting of topic.

Observation, Interpretation, Application

This is any easy pattern to follow. What are the facts; What is the writer trying to say to the people writing and why. How can you apply this to your life today?

Application, Application, Application. The ultimate goal is to apply Gods word. Strive in every bible study to get your small group members to apply the word of God to their lives personally! And to share that to keep each other accountable.

Keep discussion focused on God's word! Always come back to the biblical truth the author is saying. Its Gods word that has the power to work in us.

Keep a Positive Tone

Also be careful that the discussion does become very critical, judgmental or negative, especially about people or the church.

Keep an eye on the clock and Wrapping up

You may find that the discussion could go on for a very long time! Make sure to set a definite time to wrap up the discussion. Watch the clock. End the discussion sensitively, saying "this is great discussion, but we do need to allow those who need to go, to go. Invite those who want to discuss more to stay if that is alright with the host.

ENJOY! Do everything you can, within the guidelines, to make the discussion time enjoyable for everyone!

"A model meeting isn't one that goes on for three hours because the leader lets the discussion range across a dozen topics, but one that ends with members applying biblical truth to everyday areas of their lives."

Outside the Small Group Meeting.

Again, between the small group meeting times, there will be opportunities for you to meet the needs of small group members. Let me suggest some things you can do!

1. **Pray** for you small group members regularly. Especially the needs and concerns they share during the group time.
2. **Phone or Email.** Making calls or emails to follow up on needs or concerns that came up during the small group time are a great way to care for you small group members!
3. **Visit.** An opportunity may even arise to visit a small group member in the hospital, in their home as certain needs and concerns arise.
4. **Meeting Specific Needs.** Specific needs may arise during the small group time that can be met outside the small group time. Look for those opportunities and share them with your Group!

Service & Outreach Projects!

Again, one of the key elements to spiritual growth and transformation is serving God! We serve God by serving the community and church around us! We recommend that every 6-8 weeks you plan a service opportunity within the church or in the community. If you are unsure or need more ideas, speak to a member of the Discipleship Ministry Team.

Conflict Resolution

Conflict and offense are inevitable. When we mix with people who are sinful (all of us) we expose ourselves to the possibility of conflict and offence. It's especially likely where we are relating closely to others. Disagreement is also inevitable because we are different from each other, praise God! Disagreement does not always need to lead to offence and conflict. We can disagree with someone without sinning and taking offence. The bottom line is that **we are responsible for resolving conflicts in a Godly and redemptive manner!** Avoiding conflict resolution builds a dam between us and others allowing a reservoir of misunderstanding, bitterness, unforgiveness, and resentment to form. Eventually the dam will burst!

1. Try to avoid conflict. (1 Peter 4:8; Romans Ephesians 4:2; James 4:11; 5:9). Not by ignoring it, or switching groups. But be realistic. Set guidelines, communicate honesty, gently, and deal with the little things.

2. Work through it. James 1:9.

- **Evaluate the conflict** to see whether it involves sin, personal preference or mere disagreement.
- **Get a grasp of the issues** by listening carefully to BOTH sides. Stay on the subject and only handle one issue at a time.
- **Finally only speak what will lead to Godly resolution.** Don't accuse, express anger or self-pity.

The Goal is to solve the problem, grow closer in the process, and become more Godly through the process.

Confronting Sin in others

There may come the time that confronting someone's sin in the group becomes biblically necessary. (**Matthew 18:16; James 5:19-20; Ephesians 4:15**). This must be done carefully and biblically.

- 1. Determine if confronting the person is necessary. Proverbs 19:11.** It is not necessary to go to someone every time they sin or we are offended. Open conflicts NEED to be addressed and resolved. Ask yourself: Is this a sin pattern? Is it serious enough to require immediate attention? Am I the person to confront?
- 2. Define the Problem.** What are you confronting this person about? Is sin involved? What was the impact? How does he/she need to change? You must be able to define things **biblically. (2 Timothy 3:16-17)**
- 3. Examine your own heart & life. Galatians 6:1; Matthew 7:3** This helps to prepare you in humility and gentleness.
- 4. Prepare Your Heart.** Make sure **your motives** are right. To Glorify God and turn your brother from sin. Make sure **your attitudes** are right. Gentleness, patience, humility, and a genuine concern for the welfare of others. **Pray** for Gods leading and for the person's repentance.

5. **Confront.** Speak to the person privately. Plan for the right atmosphere with minimal distractions. Affirm your affection for the person. Share your perceptions. Maintain a spirit of inquiry. Offer biblical counsel. Present an appropriate course of action. Pray for them.
6. **Provide time. Follow up.**
7. **If the person does not respond in a Biblical way, inform a pastor of the situation, and walk through Matthew 18:15-17.**

Responding to being confronted

Sometimes WE are the ones who sin and need to be confronted. How we respond will have a significant influence on our group and relationships! Its far more important to regularly examine our hearts to identify instances where we may have sinned.

1. **Listen humbly and prayerfully.** Ask the Holy Spirit for conviction and Godly sorrow. **2 Corinthians 9:7-11**
2. **Confess and ask forgiveness where possible.** Ask for time if needed. But be careful, sometimes this can be a sign of pride and unteachableness. Confess your sins honestly, clearly, specifically, and completely. Never gloss over your sins, offer excuses for your behavior or generalize. Express sorrow. Let the person know that you realize how your actions affected them and let them know you are willing to accept the consequences. Ask for forgiveness.
3. **Thank and affirm the person for coming.** Remember the goal isn't just to clear your conscience, but to gain reconciliation with the one you sinned against.

Procedures for starting a New Curriculum / Session

At the end of a particular small group study:

1. Decide as a facilitator whether you want to continue to facilitating another small Group session! You can continue leading your current group, start another group, or resign.
2. Consider what Study or Curriculum you want to do. It has to be approved by the Small Groups Ministry Team. Always strive for something that gets people into the Word of God and is very applicable. This may be done with your current small group, or you might want to head up a new small group opportunity!
3. Ask your small group members to consider their involvement! Give them the freedom to commit to another study or to opt out of your small group and possible join another.
4. Consider if this is the time and opportunity to birth a new group! Is there a small group leader ready in your group? Are you full and need to create more room for growth? Waiting too long often kills small group growth.
5. Promoting your small group and giving others the opportunity to join. At the start of each small group session, we will promote what your group is doing in the church to give opportunity for new people to join, unless the group is full.
6. Small Group Evaluation. We also provide a small group evaluation form for the members of your small group to fill out. These are confidential, even to the small group facilitator, and are only seen by the small group ministry team. They help us evaluate to better our small group ministry.