

The 5 "Ms" Every Leader Should Know

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1. Minister to the needs of your members.

Okay, so that may seem obvious, but one of the critical roles of a small group leader is to shepherd the people in your group. Does the word "shepherd" scare you? It shouldn't. God has provided you with the gifts and abilities to care for those in your small group.

In a healthy small group, the members, as well as the leaders, must be. In fact, I would say that the success of your small group depends on its health. A healthy small group integrates all 5 biblical purposes into its life, but it's the leader's job to establish the biblical purpose of "fellowship" within the first few weeks of your group's existence.

As the small group leader, you need to pray for and "love on" each member of the group. That means making sure people feel connected with other members in the group, being attentive to what people say in the group - perhaps, for example, you may sense after the first several meetings that one couple in the group is struggling in their marriage. Your job as a leader is to pray for them. After you develop a deeper friendship with the couple, you may even suggest talking to a pastor or Christian counselor.

My point, simply, is that as the shepherd of the small group you need "eyes" to see the needs of your group.

2. Mentor their spiritual maturity.

An effective small group leader seeks to cultivate the spiritual habits of his or her group.

And how do you do that?

You must first know the condition of your "sheep"-those under your care. In the back of your mind, as you lead the group, you need to ask this for each person in the group, "What is the next step in his or her spiritual

For an unmarried couple who is living together, they need to get married! That's their next logical step in obedience to Christ. For others, it may be baptism. Others may need to learn how to give or focus on their family or attend church more regularly or step up their service in the church or community.

3. Motivate the "shape" (spiritual gifts) of your members for ministry.

You, as the leader of the group, must model this principle. It's the "trickle down" approach to spiritual maturity. What your members see in you is what they begin to emulate in their lives.

Do your members know what your spiritual gifts are? Do they know you have the gift of leadership? Have you described to them your pathway in becoming a small group leader?

Are your group members growing in their gifts? Where are they serving now? Where should they be serving in 6 months or a year?

One of the key "shepherding" functions of a small group leader is to motivate each member to harness his or her spiritual gifts for service in God's kingdom.

4. Multiply the life and mission of your members.

It's not enough for your members to stay members. Every member must become a multiplier--to multiply their life through passing

on the faith to others, through starting a new small group, through training others to assist in the development of the small group.

As a small group leader, your vision must be to see your group collectively and its members individually to take the next logical step in development. There must always be movement growth towards reaching the mission of God's kingdom.

That may mean training another set of leaders to launch another small group. Or it may mean making sure the "empty chair" is always filled. Or, it may mean that you challenge group members to make a difference in their daily lives or profession.

Your role is to pour your life into your group members, so that they will pour their lives into others.

5. Model a surrendered heart.

Pride and arrogance and worldly leadership have no place in a small group. Never forget that what is happening in your group is the work of God Almighty. Not you.

If your leadership is effective, if your shepherding is making a difference in the lives of your members, expect spiritual warfare. That is, expect conflict, struggles, and trials. Satan loves to strangle healthy small groups through, for example, petty conflicts among members.

That's when you, the leader, need most to model a surrendered, humble attitude.

God works best in our weakness when things are blowing apart that's when God is strong. What is your Isaac? That is, what do you need to lay down on the altar to be consumed by the fire of God's presence? God loves the confessions and prayers of a broken and contrite heart. Worship God no matter what your circumstances with a thankful and hopeful heart. Your soul and the very health of your small group is at stake.