

Small Groups

an introduction

Suitable for those joining
or starting a group



Laurence Singlehurst



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Small Groups - an introduction

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Introduction

You have been invited to join a small group - perhaps called a connect group, cell group, a home group or a life group – their names go on! But what does it mean to be in one of these groups? Or maybe you have been in a group for some while and want to refresh your understanding of what it means to be in one of these groups. What should my expectations be in the context of my involvement?

This booklet seeks to give some biblical background and framework along with a practical understanding of what it might be like to be part of a group. I am using a structure for our thoughts that explores the beliefs and the basic theology that lies behind these groups and then from those beliefs we will extract some values which shape our behaviour. We will then look at the outcomes in terms of our actions as it is very important that our actions are based on beliefs and values otherwise we feel coerced and pushed. If we have embraced something at a beliefs and values level then our behaviours flow from this and feel real. Just in case you are wondering about this process the apostle Paul reminds us of it, *‘Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.* (Romans 12:2) He is giving us a picture here that before we do things we need to engage our hearts and minds to understand and then the actions come in the right place.

Laurence Singlehurst

Chapter 1

Beliefs behind small groups

To understand what a small group could look like in terms of the atmospheres created and the things that could happen in the group we need to take a big step away. By doing this we actually look at a much wider picture and ask ourselves ‘What is God’s dream for us as believers - what are His hopes and aspirations for us?’ Then the small group becomes a vehicle, just like church on a Sunday is. It becomes a part of the process by which God’s dreams for us and others are worked out. So how do we know what God’s dream is? Well of course we find it in scripture and there are a few places in scripture where it seems to be given to us in a very concise format. One of these is found in Mark 12:28-29, Jesus is asked:

“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

We can see four places where our love should be focused from these verses.

Firstly, in this passage of scripture we perhaps have a hint of God’s dream, the Lord our God is one. God wants us to know what He is like and that in heaven is a God of love and relationship. He is good and He wants us all to understand that and to have an opportunity to love him with all our heart and minds and strength.

This speaks of relationship, of friendship, this speaks of God being with us in the hard times when life is really difficult, it speaks of God being with us in the good times. So church in whatever shape it is found, is here to help us on this spiritual journey and to grow us in our relationship with God. Our small group plays a vital part in this as we will see later.

Secondly, it is not just a place where the focus is on us as individuals and our relationship with God. This dream is more than us just loving God, it is God's dream that we might love one another, that we would have an opportunity as Christians to build community. In doing this we show what God is like as He himself lives in a community of relationships as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus said, *'By the love that you have for one another they will know that you are my disciples'*. In other words when we listen to one another, when we encourage, when we take care of practical needs we are fulfilling God's dream, we are demonstrating real love and it is our belief that a great place for this to happen is in small groups where relationships can be built.

Thirdly, we are also to love ourselves. It is God's dream that each one of us would be whole. Sadly, however strong we are, we all carry some kind of collateral damage from life itself. When this commandment says that we are to love ourselves it is speaking of God's dream of wholeness and healing and that as we participate in church we should be healed and restored as individuals.

Fourthly, there is another focus of our love here. When it says love our neighbour it is not just thinking of our fellow Christians but it is thinking of God's wider world. It is God's dream that every Christian could in their own way, through their gifts and their lives, bring a little bit more love, and care into our world and that our lives can make a difference. It is our belief that this is what church

should do and this is what small groups should do as part of the church – they empower you to love others.

So our beliefs encompass something of God's dream but our beliefs also encompass church, this extraordinary organisation that God created - his body. We might want to reflect on what we believe about church and to do this we want to look at scripture, the glimpses that we can see in the New Testament and the early church. We also want to look at some examples from church history and this will give us some understanding of what should be happening in church today. So from the dream we could perhaps draw three strands of DNA that are to live at the heart of church life and are expressed through the lives of each believer.

Strand 1 We know that God loves us and we want to know and follow him

Strand 2 We love one another and we build caring Christian community.

Strand 3 We love a lost world and each one of us seeks to make a difference.

Behind these three strands of DNA is an important implicit understanding and that is that this commandment was given by Jesus for everyone, that we are all called to do these things. It is not just leaders, it is you and I that are called to love God, to build community and to love a lost world.

So what is the nature of church, what are our beliefs around it? Well, the New Testament is not a manual or a text book but it does give us snippets, pictures etc. When we see the early church begin to gather in the book of Acts we see them in two places. In Acts 2:46 they are attending the Temple daily where they listen to teaching and they worshipped. This is their equivalent of our Sunday morning

meeting. Secondly, they met in their homes where they broke bread and had fellowship together; and so church is operating in these two spheres.

Also in the book of Acts we get other pictures of the life of the early church as found in 1 Corinthians 14-26, *'When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up'* Whenever we see the 'each ones' in the New Testament we ask ourselves 'what is the context'? Which of the two spheres is this operating in? Obviously this particular verse is not talking about a big meeting, and, as we all know from Sunday church, this is a wonderful place but it is not a place of personal contribution. A small group is; in a small group I can share my thoughts, my ideas and my hymn.

In the New Testament there is another phrase, 'one another', this phrase comes up over 130 times. Galatians 6:2 *'Carry each other's burdens'*. Ephesians 4:2 *'...bearing with one another in love'*. Ephesians 4:32 *'...be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other'*. Ephesians 5:19 *'...speaking to one another with psalms, hymns and songs'*. And on it goes. We need to think about where these 'one another's' are going to take place? Some could happen on a Sunday morning but most of them are going to happen either on a one to one basis or in the context of our small group. This becomes a natural environment for us to encourage one another.

So we see how important it is to have a context for the 'each ones' and the 'one another's' and as we seek to understand the early church we realise that their small groups were the foundation of church. They met in the large group for worship, teaching and encouragement as and when it was possible, due to persecution or other factors. So in the first 300 years of the church the small group

would have been the most important component of church. However as church became legal and was adopted by the Roman Empire we see the buildings and the Sunday worship becoming more and more important. At first held in a balance and then later on small groups disappearing and church on a Sunday becoming the strongest component part.

If we look at this in more detail we can see that both the bigger meeting and the smaller meeting have strengths. There is something special about worshipping in a large gathering, about being in an environment to hear good teaching. Christians have met on a Sunday for thousands of years and experienced these good things. But there are also things that cannot happen on a Sunday. When we think of real community, of really knowing people's needs, this is hard to make happen on a Sunday. When we think of our own participation and what I might bring as an individual in the context of the 'one another's' or 'each ones', this becomes the strength of a small group. The 'one another's' also imply an accountability, a sense that someone else knows who I am and they encourage me in my walk of faith. If we are thinking of, say, the energy for mission, we all know that someone can stand up on a Sunday and ask us to do this or that but it is very hard to have any real accountability to that type of call. However this can be worked out very practically in a small group that has adopted loving a lost world as an important focus. Here, making a difference where you live and where you work is important, so we can encourage one another to see this challenge happen and have some real follow through around it. This is because of the strength of the relationships that can come in a small group context.

So my belief is that church works best when it expresses itself in the big and the small. Bill Beckham expressed this as a two winged church linking it to the idea of a bird that can soar and fly. If there

is just one wing operating i.e. just the big wing, then the bird will not be able to fly as it was originally designed to do, both wings need to be operating together. History also tells us this is important. Joel Comisky, who has written extensively around church life and small groups in his book '*2000 Years of Small Groups*' shows us how again and again the church realises that just meeting on a Sunday is not enough and this fantastic book gives us a picture of the difference small groups have made to church life down through the centuries.

In the United Kingdom we have our own great illustration of the wonder of small groups. If we go back to the 1730s and look at the church then we see some interesting things. The basic message of church was 'come' and it was all about that Sunday meeting. Most of the ministry and activity of the church was done by the leaders; the church members were mainly passive and the influence of church on the wider society was quite small and its most obvious expression was the Sunday meeting.

Into this stepped a man named John Wesley, an Anglican clergyman who had an encounter with God that so challenged and changed him that he dared to go back to first principles and ask himself questions about the shape, the nature, and the structure of church. He read his New Testament and began to get ideas by seeing what happened in the early church. He met a radical group from Germany called the Moravians and they had all sorts of new ideas and structures. Then, through his meetings in London and Bristol, as people began to hear his message and come to faith, he began an experiment of organising church in two different contexts. He believed all his life in the importance of Sunday and the place of worship, preaching and teaching in this context but he realised that if he was going to fulfil God's dream, as we described earlier, he needed something else. So he created small groups which became

known as classes. For John Wesley church began to change, no longer was the emphasis on 'come' but the emphasis was on 'go' - let's make a difference, let's change the world, let's take this Christian message to every sphere of society to make an impact where we live and where we work. The leaders stopped doing all the work and began to encourage others to do it, the church members became disciples and were active in their faith and the influence got bigger and bigger and bigger.

This new kind of church was held together by the power of the class system as it became known, which was the 'building block' of church life. In your class meeting if you were walking with God you were given your ticket which enabled you to go to church on a Sunday. This church began to grow and over the next 100 years, both through Methodism and through other forms of church at that time, there was a huge spiritual awakening. I believe church in the small, through the class system of John Wesley, had a major part to play in this awakening.

Chapter 2

Values

So we are thinking that our beliefs shape our values and our values shape our actions and behaviour. It is therefore important when joining a group to understand the values that might be drawn from the beliefs already described. Phil Potter, in his excellent book *'The Challenge of Cell Church'* lays out five values which many groups and churches have embraced. The strength of this particular idea is that, even if the groups across the church meet at different times, in different places and perhaps embrace different formats, there is a similarity if they have all adopted the same values. Phil uses a simple device of A B C D E to describe these values and here is a synopsis of them.

A is for: All involved

As we saw earlier in Mark 12:29 Jesus says the following in response to a question about which is the greatest commandment:

'The first is, hear, oh Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this you shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'

When Jesus spoke these immortal words he was addressing his disciples and he was addressing us. The implication of this passage is that these commands are for all of us. It is not just special people

who love God and do the right thing, God wants us all to be involved.

Over the last 30 years the body of Christ has gone through a number of changes, paradigm shifts if you like, and one of the most powerful ones is that we have gone from a church that is all about leaders and a special few to a church that is increasingly about us all. We have recognised that, for the body of Christ to make a difference in this country, for us to grow, leader power alone will not achieve this. It is through the participation of every member of the body of Christ that we all learn to be the people that God wants us to be and each to play their own special part.

Now, in some ways this is such a simple and common sense idea that you would expect it to be happening everywhere. However, in many churches 80% of the work is still done by 20% of the people and overcoming centuries of influence where the body of Christ has been passive rather than active takes time. Also, there are other internal factors that often hold us back. It would appear that many of us suffer from what we can call a negative self-image or a negative script. So when it comes to doing things in the life of our church we hear an all too familiar voice in our heads that says – not you, remember your last failure, you can't do this – and we are held back from doing what God might want us to do. It could equally be the influence of our education, our background, our past experience, that robs us of getting involved: our fears and anxieties.

My experience over many years is that if we embrace the value of everyone involved our small group gives us the perfect place in a safe environment for our faith to grow from passive to active. For us to begin to hear the sound of our own voice, a place where we can pray, a place where we can contribute, this can be truly life changing. I have recently seen a couple join a small group who came

from a background where they were not expected to participate. They had not prayed out loud, they had not shared their thoughts, they perhaps had not seen how their lives could influence others and yet through the small group they have become involved and it is a delight to see their participation and growth.

B is for: Becoming disciples

Matthew 5:1-2 'His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them'.

We know from this verse and many others that we are all called to be disciples, to be followers and we can understand why this might be important, that we are, as scripture says, not just hearers, but doers of the word. That as much as possible we are seeking to put our Christianity into practice and this is important for all sorts of reasons. It is our worship to God, but it is also in our post-modern and sceptical world, our most powerful witness. We live at a moment in history where, as a culture, we have become cynical about words. We are no longer prepared to trust words as we have seen too many instances of important people saying one thing and doing something quite different. It is interesting that when the disciples of John came to Jesus and they asked 'Are you the one?' he didn't give them a bible study, he said to them tell John what you see, what you experience. The life of Jesus, his witness, his discipleship, spoke volumes.

So, in a small group we will all be on a journey, a pathway of discipleship and this perhaps will have some characteristics to it. This could be one of the very first places where we have courage to be honest and ask for prayer because at times we all find the Christian life difficult. This could be a place of honesty for us, this could be a place where we do not just hear scripture but we wrestle together to understand how that might work in our complex lives of

today's culture. It is also a place, because we are on this journey with others, where we can experience the encouragement and the sense of togetherness. Holding each other accountable is a powerful experience in helping us to grow, to change, and to live out the Christian life.

C is for: Creating community

John 13:35 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

In this powerful statement Jesus is telling us about the power of community, that if we as Christians are connected together in a genuine way this is not just of benefit to us but it is a demonstration to the world of the reality of the Christian message. It is true to say that when we go to church on a Sunday there is a measure of community and that is a good thing but when we are in a small group we can step into a whole new level of community. What does this look like? For example, in our group we had a lady suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome which meant for a number of years she had no energy whatsoever and so for the small group this was an opportunity for the community to cook meals and to help support a family in crisis. At other times it is just simple things; a word, a phone call, a cup of coffee, those human connections that in some way carry the spirit of the divine God who himself lives in community as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As we all grow in community and learn to give and receive what is the currency of the Kingdom of God, we not only benefit in the now but we become community carriers and we take this simple idea of community into our wider world. In a sense we become carriers of the kingdom of God as we do this.

In talking to a senior policeman responsible for a good sized town here in England, he said that 40% of the work his officers do relates to the breakdown of community. Nothing to do with policing in the real sense of the word, they were responding to calls of loneliness, responding to things that a good neighbour could do. So as we learn community in our small group we take community wherever we go and it is transformational.

A young woman worked in an office building that was really quite cold in terms of its atmosphere and nobody knew one another; it wasn't a great place to be. But an ordinary church member who had experienced community in her small group brought its essence into this workplace. Her warm smile, her conversations, her getting to know everybody, joining the threads together began to bring a warmth that thawed the cold atmosphere. It restored a sense of community that this particular space had not seen for a very long time. So in your small group you will experience community and you will become part of community as you give and receive and care together.

D is for Doing evangelism

Matthew 5:13 'You are the salt of the earth' 5:14 'you are the light of the world'.

In these two little phrases Jesus is speaking to us about our evangelism, about our mission. In Matthew 28:28 the disciples are told to go. There is probably no greater challenge that we face as Christians than the sharing of our faith and making a difference where we work and where we live. The word evangelism is the stuff of nightmares, pictures of standing on soap boxes float before the eyes, knocking on doors, speaking when no one wants to listen. It's terrifying and so the challenge is to understand what being

missional is, what doing evangelism is in today's culture. And how can we live out our faith and share our faith in ways that are appropriate, dynamic and doable and not terrifying! It is my experience that this value is one of the hardest to take root in the life of a small group and in the life of church as a whole. We know we should be doing mission but we are not quite sure what this is and so the reality is we don't do very much.

In our small group we have an opportunity to learn together, to go on a journey of discovery amongst friends, and as we do this we find that mission begins in the heart. It starts as a question; do we care about people? John 3:16 tells us that 'God so loved the world', His motivation is love and that is why He sends his Son. So we can pray that God will give us big hearts and we can realise astonishing things. For example, in a recent survey called Talking Jesus we learn that over 60% of people who come to faith are members of our family or our friends therefore in the simplest terms doing evangelism is about being a good family member. It is about having unchurched friends, being acquainted with people and connected with people who don't go to church. As you do life in a natural way with them, living out your Christian values, telling your story where appropriate, inviting them to carol services, Easter services, suddenly doing evangelism becomes an easier thing. We can all be a better family member!

We have seen churches over the last 10 years or so, stepping out into social action, through food banks, street pastors, giving money advice, and so many other initiatives. Doing evangelism is also about being a volunteer, helping in the food bank, the mums and toddler project. Through these volunteering connections we share faith.

So the role of the small group is, if possible, to spend a few moments each week praying for the relationships we have, we pray for one another to keep on reaching out, to be involved in the projects that our church might be doing, inviting people where appropriate to church events. My experience is that to stay missional, to keep on reaching out, takes energy and encouragement and we can receive a measure of that in our big meetings on a Sunday. However if we make this value a part of our small group it empowers us on an ongoing basis in the specific areas that are relevant to us as individuals.

E is for: Encountering God

Luke 19:5-8. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

In these amazing verses we read the story of Zacchaeus encountering Jesus and its transformational effect and perhaps one of the most clearly understood purposes of small groups is to encounter God. Yes this happens as we meet on a Sunday but there is something very personal and life changing in meeting God in a small group. This happens through our grappling with scripture together, through our honesty and vulnerability and being prayed for, through the joy of praying for others, in learning to give and receive. Suddenly it is as if God has stepped out of the shadows and into a much more intimate and close space with us and the intensity

of our faith and our experience goes up a jot or two; something special is taking place.

Many small groups around the country have a time of worship that is not necessarily singing as this can be hard in a small group. It is what we call 'non-musical worship' where we reflect on scripture, on creation, listen to music and through these different experiences we encounter God. It is extremely hard in a big church meeting to make a more public response.

However, asking who wants prayer just becomes a part of the life of a small group and here it is not such a big step to say, 'pray for me, I am going through a hard time, my situation is difficult'. As we are prayed for we encounter the living God. Alternatively as we pray for someone else we encounter God through seeing our prayer make a difference. Small groups become that safe place where we can experiment, experience and encounter God in all sorts of different ways.

Chapter 3

Different types of groups

Small groups work in different ways. This depends on the particular church situation; some will meet once a week, some two or three times a month and very rarely once a month. Some groups start with a meal others may not. Some have an emphasis, it might be looking at scripture, it might be community, it might be around a task or reaching out in some way or other. And of course there are a multitude of names such as, life groups, home, groups, cell groups, connect groups. What I think is important is, whatever the name or the focus, the beliefs and the values that have been described earlier begin to outwork themselves in the context of that particular group.

Groups tend to have different structures which give a framework to the meeting time. A friend of mine thinks of these acting like a trellis that you have in a garden. The trellis is there to support the growth of the plants, it is essential to help support the plants as they grow, but is not the main focus. In fact the trellis is often completely covered by the plants. So the structures have their benefits even if at times they may feel a bit restrictive. They help us in a number of ways.

Firstly, it makes it possible to give different parts of the meeting to different people in the group, this delegation creates participation and ownership. Secondly, it creates safety as everyone knows the pattern we are following and feels safe making their contribution in the relevant place rather than not being sure and becoming hesitant. Thirdly, having a framework means that leadership of the group is

easier as it becomes more of a facilitation style of leadership, this means that leadership is open to more people and is less pressurising.

But for the purpose of this booklet I have tried to focus on the beliefs and values that lie behind any structure you would want to use as there are so many different ideas out there.

One of the most popular structures that has been used by many groups for a number of years is the following:

Welcome

This is an icebreaker, an open ended question that all members would feel free to answer. Often the person asking the question will answer it first. Using this type of question gets everyone talking and creates an atmosphere of participation from the very start of the group.

Worship

In many groups this tends to be a creative non-musical idea a reflection from scripture or a response to creation. This directs our attention towards God and creates a spiritual atmosphere in the group.

Word

This part of the small group meeting looks at scripture in some way often reflecting back on what was preached on a Sunday. The group discuss the content of the message look at the implications and applications in their lives and then spend time in prayer and ministry together. This encourages God's word to be outworked in changed lives.

Witness

This would look at how the group is reaching out to their front lines, being salt and light, where they work and where they live. Praying for one another in this context and for their community and thinking about their missional responsibility as individuals as a small group with perhaps wider discussion on how they might support church based initiatives.

The table below shows how this particular structure outworks the beliefs and values we have been looking at so far in this booklet:

Structure	Belief	Value
Welcome	God loves and values us	All involved/creating community
Worship	Loving God	Encountering God
Word	Loving one another	Becoming disciples
Witness	Loving our lost world	Doing evangelism

In summary, we can see how using a framework or structure like the 4Ws above ensures that the beliefs and values at the heart of our church life can be consistently outworked through our small groups.

Chapter 4

Connect Groups

The 4Cs

One of the most common names for groups is ‘connect groups’. We can use this idea to perhaps think of the 4Cs that need to take place in a group.

Firstly, connecting with God. We have seen over many years of working with small groups that they are about connecting with God. As individuals worship together, look at scripture together, pray for one another, there is a deep connection with God which is created and strengthened as the group focus on him and his word.

Secondly, they are about connecting with one another. There is no doubt that as you share in a small group, as you pray and receive prayer, as you practise hospitality, and receive hospitality, a bonding takes place, a real care. Jesus said *‘by the love that you have for one another they will know you are my disciples’*, and we certainly can’t underestimate the importance of this kind of connection. It brings wholeness to people, it sometimes also involves very practical help, and in addition is an implicit witness to others.

Thirdly, our connection to a lost world. A healthy small group is not just about connecting with God and with one another, it is thinking of our ‘front line’, which is about how I can make a difference where I work, where I live, at the school gate, with my neighbours. There is no doubt that across the UK at this time there is a huge missional momentum. It is my conviction that it is only

small groups that can keep that momentum strong and resourced as these groups pray and support their members in the key areas of their lives.

Fourthly, our contribution. You can tell who a group belongs to by the voices you hear within it. If the only voice you hear is the leader's voice and one or two extroverts you know who the group belongs to, yes the leader. But if you hear the voices of everyone you know that group belongs to all those members, and this is 'every member' contribution. To my mind this is the hidden secret of successful small groups.

Contribution in a safe environment where a person is listened to, where they can pray for others and receive prayer is hugely beneficial to that person. It gives them a sense that God can use them. One of the great wonders I have seen in groups over the years are individuals who join a group who have been entirely passive in their faith, but over a period of time the group changes them and they come alive. Before you know it they are not only contributing in the small group, they are also making a difference where they work and where they live, they are speaking in their church on a Sunday; their hidden treasure is released.

Each church may have a different doorway. For you connecting with God might be the most important part. For another church it might be connecting with a lost world, for another the fellowship with one another. And all of this is good, you can have a sense of what your church needs and that can be your primary doorway for people joining a group, but I suggest that all of these 4Cs should be a part of every group, which will give a holistic and powerful dynamic.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

So what can we draw from these ideas? Firstly, we realise that we are joining in with God's big dream and these groups are an important contribution to that as they are a valid expression of church and will help and encourage us on our spiritual journey. Secondly, beliefs and values are important as they shape our behaviours. If we can embrace the values that we describe we will get more out of our group, our group will get more out of us and we will grow in our love and worship towards God.

For some joining a group will be a scary experience, perhaps you have never been in this kind of environment. My advice is once you join and you give it a few weeks I think you will find this is a great place to be. For others perhaps you have been in a group that just looked at scripture, a traditional bible study group and the type of group we have been describing will feel different but will take you on a step. Perhaps others have been in groups that had bible study and an expression of Christian community, which is good, but perhaps we need to move on a step. If we embrace the values described these groups will also empower us to be missional. This will seem challenging for many but once again when we are on a journey together and have mutual support we see it is not as scary as it might have seemed. Lastly, it is our participation in small group life. Of course this must never be forced or pressured but as we go with the thought that our contribution is worthwhile we will be surprised what takes place. I trust you enjoy your small group experience.

Other resources



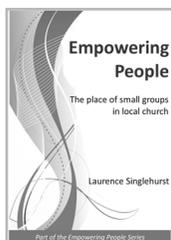
40 more Creative Worship Ideas for Small Groups

We have brought together 40 Creative Worship Ideas which have been printed on a card with a picture and presented in an attractive durable tin. These worship cards have been organised into six streams that reflect historical streams of our Christian faith - Contemplative, Holiness, Charismatic, Social Justice, Evangelical, and Incarnational.



40 Missional Ideas for Small Groups

Building on the success of our first tin of worship ideas, our second set of 40 more Creative Worship Ideas covers a broad range of Christian worship. We all connect with God in different ways, so these sets of cards each contain a range of ideas with the hope that everyone in your group can lead worship confidently on the following subjects: Our lives, Scripture, Objects, Words, The natural world, Games, 'I am' sayings of Jesus, Stories behind the hymns.



Empowering People

Laurence Singlehurst

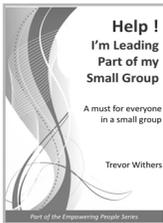
Laurence Singlehurst is asked all the time what have we learnt in the last 20 years about holistic small groups with a missional heartbeat, sometimes called cells? In this booklet he answers the questions: what has worked? What has not worked? What is the legacy? And 'Am I positive about the future?' This booklet contains lessons learned and ideas for the future to give churches and individuals the best practice for small groups. This booklet is also available as a free PDF download at www.celluk.org.uk.



Developing Leaders

Laurence Singlehurst and Trevor Withers

In this booklet, Laurence Singlehurst and Trevor Withers have provided a viable way for your church to train and equip people to lead small groups, making it possible to have more groups in the life of the local church which is often stifled through lack of potential leaders. This booklet has been designed to enable you to run a training group including both theory and practice for potential small group leaders. We use the word potential advisedly as the idea is that this group of individuals do not have to be committed to become leaders; they can be involved in the training group as a way of seeing if it is something they may want to do. In this way more people will gain an understanding and experience of small group life which will benefit them and any group that they may be a part of, whether or not they choose to become a leader now or in the future.



Help! I'm Leading Part of my Small Group

Trevor Withers

Designed to help small group members who are leading one of the sections of the meeting on any occasion. The aim is to increase the understanding of what should be happening in each of the sections and give practical ideas and help that will make the section you are leading a success.



Discipleship Deck playing cards

We think this is a really good resource: a pack of 52 cards each containing a question or challenge about relationships, lifestyle, spiritual growth or mission. These cards can be used in any discipleship context, but we think they also lend themselves exceedingly well to small groups. For example, some of the cards would make fantastic ice-breakers for the welcome section of your small group meeting, others would be very suitable for the witness section. And it makes it very easy for members to participate by leading one of the sections of your small group.

About the author



Laurence Singlehurst

Laurence is the Director of Cell UK and was its founder over twenty years ago.

He has a passion for equipping churches to reach their communities, with an emphasis on friendship evangelism. He has a heart to see holistic small groups with a missional heartbeat established in churches up and down our nation.

He is also on the board and leadership team of HOPE, chairman of Westminster Theological College and a board member of several other charities.

He is a regular conference and church speaker.

Laurence is the author of several books including: the best seller Sowing Reaping Keeping, Loving the Lost, Beyond the Clouds and The Gospel Message Today.

To purchase our books and resources and for information about our training days and courses visit our website at www.celluk.org.uk

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