

Deadly Sins of Small Groups

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Introduction:

Who we are and what we do.

What we are figuring out and learning

Getting to know you a bit.

International community fostering small group ministry.

Three Installments of training we do at Willow

1.

2. Training Your Small Group Leaders - Pt 2

3. 7 Deadly Sins of Small Groups - Pt 3 (Advanced training)

Troubleshooting guide.

There are a few things that tend to break in small group ministry.

a. Systemic level in the whole church

b. The small group level within the sm gp.

Guide your thinking around these things that tend to break.

Consultative in nature. Do more Q and A.

How Willow has structured small group ministry.

Ministry Heads that oversee other staff called Division leaders that oversee small group leaders. For every 5 small groups we have a coach. For every 10 coaches we have a division leader.

This “span of care” transcends every ministry @ Oakbrook.

Two Resources:

1. Leading Life Changing Small Groups - Donahue

2. Coaches Handbook (helpful for coaches of small group leaders)

Basket - Garage Sale Types of things you might find at a garage sale.

Reach in and take something out that somehow prompts you to tell something about yourself. Oh this makes me think about a piece of who I am, some character quality, some funny thing that happened to you, where you live,explain something about yourself you don't mind sharing with others.

Deadly sin #1: Do you have the right person exercising “point” leadership?

Hardest question to answer. Easy in the church to have the ‘tenure’ mindset. Unless they mess up badly they stay in that ministry regardless of whether they are effective or not.

Not having a person or having the wrong person in the “point” position. Must be clear about who the “championing leader” of moving the church toward being a church “of”

small groups. Make sure someone is designated to champion this movement. They must be a strategist, the prod, the voice, the one who can address leaders and congregation.

A church “of” small groups = becoming a church whose infrastructure of the church in all ministries be done around a small group based strategy.

We started with the person first and then moved to the strategy.

How will this movement be lead at the staff level (paid and volunteer level)

I have 12 - 13 area leaders (champions of small groups). Do we have the right person? You can choose to back down from that question or you can deal with it. Can be a lot of fear about this or you can have the attitude of being a servant and being used where God wants me.

What you are looking for in a point leader:

~ **Passion and commitment:** a biblical passion, they themselves must have a developed theology of ‘community’ living out the dream of Christ. They need to have a sense of calling to the role. They need to have a sense of calling to the church. Its the place I love being.

~ **Ablility to inspire trust.** Able to build trust among people.

Fundamentally leading people is about gaining trust. It isn’t a power thing. If you are going to lead a small group you must be able to extend a “wide touch” to people and win their trust.

~ **Team building.** Team players and team builders.

a. Can this person get people to lay aside the personal for the sake of the whole? The evangelical church tends to have people that function with a mindset that is very personal. They engage in the church because of what they receive from it. People who are small group leaders need to be people who are growing in that ability.

b. Can they get people to bring their best to the whole?

Jack Welsh: CEO of GE - group of 12 companies.

Joe Torey: Manager of NY Yankees - no names who are winning. Amazing leader. He is able to get people to bring their best to the table.

Jay Beckinstein. Jazz leader

c. Communicating the vision

Rooted in Scripture.

Urgent

Has to be personal.

Has to be modeled.

Watch it close and study it hard.

d. Stay on mission. Guard against entropy.

Shocked at the level of vigilance required in order to watch small group ministry and make sure it is happening effectively.

A duty of vigilance. If you sign up for “point leadership” you are signing up for watchfulness.

Putting the right people in the right place. Asking the, “Do we have the right person” for the other ministry functions. Good at gift assessment. Putting the right people in the right places is critical.

Colabritory leadership:

Mutual submission

Recognition of the gifts of others.

Value the leadership of others.

Not a “renegade” leader or group.

We are trying to build the church into something great for God. It is about moving together as a team in the same direction.

Vertical ministry alignment: from the top to the bottom of the church we are working together so that every ministry is aligned with the church’s overall goals. Ever leader signing up to be part of the “all hands on deck” with what we are trying to do as a church.

Horizontal Alignment: making sure every person’s efforts are coordinated with each other so that no one interferes with each other but rather complements one another as we move together toward a vertically aligned ministry as a church. We are a group of leaders that have laid down our personal agenda and are taking steps toward aligning our ministry with that of the whole. Now, we have calendars....

#2 Deadly Sin: Not having clarity on what the ministry objectives are or the direction of the ministry. Developing a strategic orientation.

The ability to connect individual performance to organizational outcomes. To be able to convert ‘what I do’ to ‘what the church is trying to achieve’. Assume the church knows what it is trying to achieve.

Example: Hybels wants to be able to walk up to any staff person and ask them, “Do you know the three things you must do today in order for the church to achieve its mission.”

Bill Hybels...I know what I have to do.

~ I have to provide point leadership to Willow.

~ I have to be able to provide point leadership to the staff and elders.

~ I have to preach great messages.

Russ Robinson:

~ I have to hire and develop an area leader team that is effective.

If they function effectively, I win. If they don’t, I lose.

- ~ I have to assess and assure the effectiveness of every ministry @ Willow.
- ~ I have to wave the small groups banner.

Could you answer that question?

1. I must walk with Christ in a disciplined manner.
2. I must recruit, develop and shepherd a godly, effective team of “shepherding leaders” to shepherd the Oakbrook church family.
3. I must preach great messages.

Small Group Level - Three Principles

1. What are the warning signs that leadership is failing or beginning to fade or for some reason our leaders aren't connecting:

a. Lose of passion - when people's hearts don't beat fast for sm gp ministry.

Is this a job thing for those who are doing ministry.

Is this a calling or duty you think God wants you to do?

Are you doing it but you have more passion for something else?

Can't fake it.

b. No desire for leadership community

~ Formal

~ Informal

Not excited about getting together with other leaders.

This is the kind of people I want to do ministry and life with.

c. Value paper work over people work. (The Top Ten Mistakes Leaders Make)

Too focused on curriculum, on their agenda, too focused on something besides people in the group. Leaders must have room to innovate.

d. Lose of Vision

Leaders fail to have a vision for the church and for their group. They fail to capture what it is that we are about. Fail to capture the moment. Mark moments for the group.

Looking for “god things” to happen in small groups. Making “alters of remembrance”.

“Do not let this book of the law depart from your mouth. Meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. His Word will give you hope. It is truth and it is life. And it has power.

Something that other books can never have. I exhort you to learn this book. It will take your life and then some. My ultimate wish for your life is for you to follow Christ and to know His Word. Then God promises to make you prosperous and successful.”

Two Commitments:

1. Choosing to let your life be marked by truth!
 2. Choose to mark moments for others learning God's Word.
- Leaders with vision.

- e. People are waning in their leadership when they resort to control models of leadership rather than servanthood models.

What separates facilitators from leaders?

Churches and individuals are concerned about either being a leader or people taking leadership and exercising authority over others. So the church and people soften the role and call the small group leader a “facilitator”. Takes the leadership energy out of it.

I believe that facilitation is a skill that a leader uses. But there are things a leader does beyond facilitating the group.

Facilitators

- ~ leads process only
- ~ values consensus over truth
- ~ provides feedback
- ~ calls people to participation
- ~ seeks opinions and draws them out to share and explain

Leaders

- ~ leads people and process
- ~ values truth over consensus
- ~ provides feedback and direction
- ~ calls people to commitment
- ~ casts vision and points people to a direction and goal.

How does a small group leader provide leadership and yet have shared leadership

Shared, colabitory, leadership - what does that mean?

Mutual submission

Recognition of gifts of others.

Values the leadership of others.

When we transition from “my group” to “our group”

What do you do with groups that don't have leadership. They are there but are sort of renegade groups not in the structure. They limit the kind of group they could become.

The whole church vision must be vital. This is a ministry together.

Can just “let them be”. Eventually they will have a lose of direction

and will lose vitality. Is there something we are not doing that we could do to help them?

What do you do with a small group leader who is not on the same page with the church. They are mavericks who have their own agenda.

We are trying to build the church into something great for God. It is about moving together as a team in the same direction. What is the barrier here? Why wouldn't you want to move in the same direction as the church is? If you are helping the church grow in Christ that is a good thing.

What role do you play in intervening in the group when the leader is going his own direction?

This is the Oakbrook process of groups!

What % of groups meeting twice a month versus weekly?
~ 1/3 - 50% weekly
~ 2/3 twice monthly or every other week.
~ Once a month = Leadership Community + Executive Committee

#3 Deadly sin: Not being clear on the framework for spiritual development

What's the simple framework we are using to move people together toward becoming like Christ?

The "wheel"

The 5 "Gs"

The 5 "Ms" or baseball diamond.

We are after TRANSFORMATION not merely INFORMATION.

We are after LIFE-CHANGE.

And we say Life-change happens best in small groups.

What life-change are we after? What is the goal we are after?

And, so, what is the life-change process?

Framework: the way we as a church together are going to talk about spiritual development. The framework provides the base for us to have a unified movement within the church so that there are clear ministry objectives for what we are trying to produce in people's lives.

Macro Level: Our ministry goal is to connect every person who calls Oakbrook their church a place to connect relationally in groups for the purpose of growing spiritually, loving one another and contributing to the work of the church."

During the next 9 months we want to...

Micro level:

Faith setting goal

Do this together

Vision statement for the group:

"To become a Christ-like community of faith that is growing spiritually through Bible study, relationally through mutual service and caring, emotionally through honest and vulnerable communication and numerically by adding people to our group this year."

Specific....

Concise....

Compelling....

Easily communicated...

We formalize a vision statement through a covenant:

Every group has one stated or not...Better stated.

Consists of two things

1. Values
2. Logistics