

LIFE Group Leader Handout

October 11, 2015

Sacred Rhythms

Pastor Mike O'Connor

Scripture—Luke 6:1-11

On a Sabbath, 1 while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples t plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, u “Why are you doing v what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?” 3 And Jesus answered them, w “Have you not read x what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate y the bread of the Presence, y which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?” 5 And he said to them, z “The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath.”

A Man with a Withered Hand

6 On another Sabbath, a he entered the synagogue band was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees cwatched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, dso that they might find a reason to accuse him. 8 But e he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there. 9 And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, fis it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” 10 And g after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And h he did so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with ifury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Main Idea—God Made the Sabbath for Man, not Man for the Sabbath

When a Christian is radicalized he or she becomes more like Jesus

Sabbath--the Early Days

- God ordained the Sabbath for the newly-released Israelites to celebrate their God as the Creator and as their Redeemer from slavery in Egypt.
- The Pharisees had made it into a flesh-exalting, Spirit quenching ritual.

Sabbath and Jesus

- What Jesus Changed: No New Testament command to celebrate a Sabbath; we are not to judge one another about we value the days of the week.
- What Didn't Change—we are not machines. The Lord of the Sabbath (Jesus) created Sabbath so that we would be free from slavery to work.

Work and Rest

- It pleases God that we work—the command to rest contains a command to work—see Exodus 20. Work restrains evil, and produces good.
- It pleases God that we rest—He created the Sabbath for us and resting quenches slavery to work for money or because of fear of want and re-focuses us n the eternal.

We should provide some structure to help us enjoy this gift. Additional resources are available at: islandchristian.com/sacredrhythms

Application—

- What did you learn or what did God re-emphasize from this teaching?
- Have your work and rest habits changed at all as you thought through your use of God's gift of Sabbath?

BASIC STRATEGIES FOR AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

Excerpted from an article

By Diana Bennett

Small groups function for different purposes according to the vision of the individual church. Healthy small groups create powerful venues for spiritual growth. Here are a few tools that will help create an environment for appropriate disclosure and authenticity in your small group; spiritual storytelling, covenant building, listening skills, asking appropriate questions, and group prayer. These tools will help create the environment where small-group members are comfortable, open, vulnerable, and accountable as they journey together in their Christian faith.

SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Everyone likes to listen to stories! Encouraging and assisting members to share their story paints a picture marked by the presence of God. Each story is different, describing the imprint of God in unique ways. Sharing stories early in the life of the group is part of the “getting to know you” process that begins the bonding and building of trusting relationships. Thoughts of “I’m not alone in my struggles” pepper the minds of the listeners. Knowing some deeper details of each other helps the group understand mind-sets, responses, personalities, and expectations. Authenticity begins to surface, trust starts to develop, and the small group connects in the safe environment of gathering.

COVENANT BUILDING

Every small group has a covenant, whether it is assumed or intentionally designed. In order to be a healthy small group, you should consider designing a group covenant. What are the expectations of each member? Why have they joined the group? What do they want to see happen in and through the small group? Patterns are developed quickly in group life. Therefore, designing the covenant early helps to establish patterns that are healthy.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Calling attention to the skill of listening well helps create a more caring, thoughtful group dynamic. Encourage group members to be thoughtful about responses, to focus on the person sharing, and to hold their thoughts until the appropriate time. This builds an environment of care and authenticity. If members feel they are not being listened to or will always get advice, sharing becomes less truthful.

ASKING APPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

Recognizing the stage of life development in a small group is important when thinking about the questions a leader might ask the group. Leaders, by knowing their group, have powerful opportunities to ask questions that are safe and appropriate for personal disclosure; questions that will move the group along to higher accountability while maintaining a healthy environment. If questions don’t focus on “what will I do differently because of the Scripture?” the personal implication and application is lost.

PRAYER GUIDELINES

Prayer allotment and patterns at times become the nemesis of group life. The allotted time for prayer is often consumed by a prayer concern discussion, not allowing proper time for the prayer itself! Explore different prayer patterns that allow each person to pray often and not one person dominating. Using the ACTS (adoration, confession, thanksgiving, supplication) format, conversational prayers, and prayer partners are worth implementing.

Unless your purpose for gathering is connection and fellowship only, these are tools that are important to consider as a leader begins a new group. When this environment is experienced, members grow spiritually and mature in their Christian faith, which should be, at some level, the goal of every group!