

Plant

Essential training for planting Life Groups

Jon and Judith Witt



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Dignity

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English

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Planting New Groups

Every Life Group should look to plant another Life Group somewhere near to them every year. This could be in the same village or community or it could be where a friend lives.

This training manual is to give you and your group the material to do this. It will show you how to plant another group. It will also show you how to train the new group's leaders.

The aim is simple: All Life Groups should try and plant a new group near them every year. The new group should try to do this as well.

The Banana Tree

Mature banana trees create shoots of new child banana trees next to them. The main plant supports the new growth until the children are able to grow alone. This is what we should all aim to do with our groups.

The main banana tree dies to itself. It gives its life so that the young banana plants can grow and bear their own fruit. We do not actually need to die; our group can go on. The principle is to give life to others.

Unless we have the servant attitude of Jesus and allow our group to give time and money to another group we will be limited in the effect we have.

Planting Life Groups Again and Again

Life Groups should not stay the same over time. You should always be inviting new people to join. When your group has been meeting for a time, your group should try to plant another Life Group nearby. You can plant as many groups as you want.



LOOK for those who will be good leaders



TEACH them how to lead then **PLANT** a new group in or near your community



SUPPORT the new group and leader



RELEASE the leader and group to run alone



INVITE the new group leaders to meet once a month in a local cluster








REPEAT this life cycle in the new group and in your own group after some time

Two Ways to Plant a new Life Group

Here we are going to show you two ways to plant a new Life Group. The first one is called **Multiplying a Group**, the second is called **Inviting Friends**.

We are going to use some diagrams to help us understand these methods. Here is a guide to what the symbols mean.

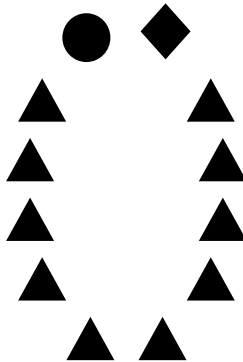
Symbol	Meaning
	This is the leader of a group.
	This is the person that the leader is training to lead with them. They will eventually lead their own group.
	This is a group member.
	A new leader that is being trained.
	A friend that is invited to a Life Group

Method 1: Multiplying a Group

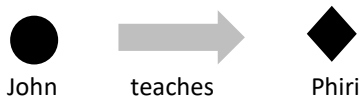
This method of planting a Life Group can only be used when:

- the Life Group has been meeting for longer than 6 months.
- the Life Group is strong and is growing together well.
- there is more than one capable leader and organiser.

Here is a diagram that represent a Life Group. There are 2 leaders and 10 people attending.

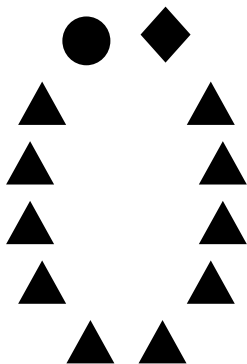


The main leader of the group, we'll call him John has been teaching and helping Phiri to learn how to run the Life Group well.

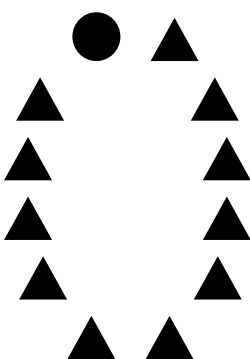


When Phiri is feeling like he can run the group well, John continues to lead the existing group while Phiri goes off to plant a new group. Phiri doesn't take the group members from John's group. The new group finds members of its own.

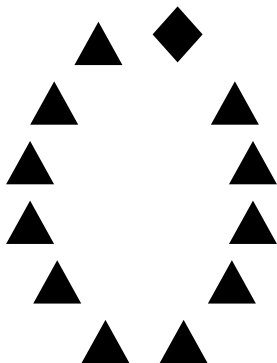
Original group with John and Phiri



Phiri starts a second group and invites new people to it while John continues to lead the original group.

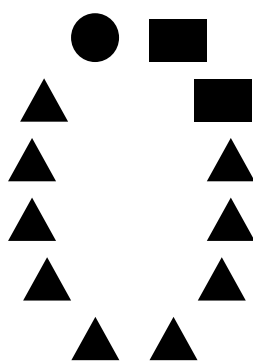


John's group with existing members

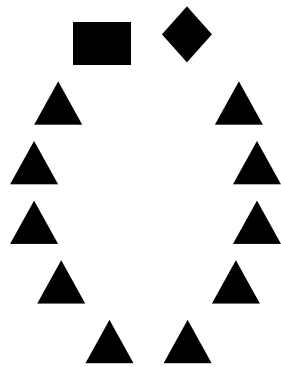


Phiri's group with new members

In a short time, both John and Phiri have picked one or two people in their new groups to train.



John’s group where he is training 2 new leaders.



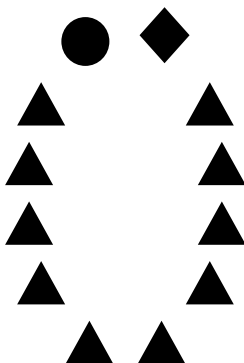
Phiri’s group where he is training 1 new leader.

The cycle can happen again and again.

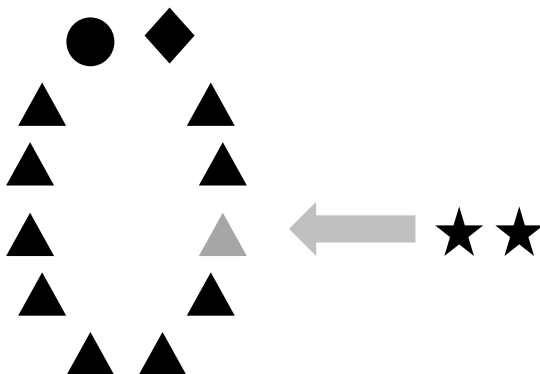
Method 2: Inviting Friends

This method of planting a Life Group can be used when the group is weaker and will work really well if the Life Group knows friends and contacts in a neighbouring village or community.

Here we have our Life group below. There are 2 leaders and 10 people attending. The circles show the leaders; the triangles show the people attending.

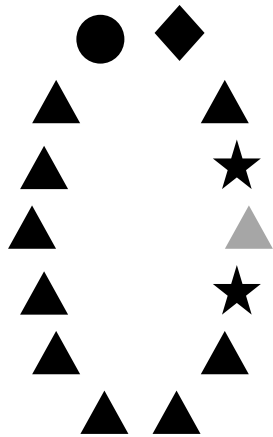


This time its a little different. Esther who is a member of the group invites two of her friends Lovemore and Glory from a village 3 km away. Esther is the grey triangle. Esther's friends are the stars.

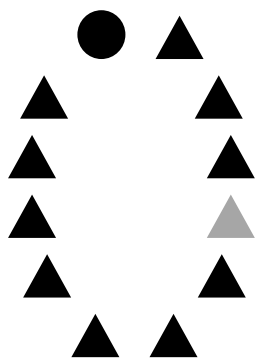


Esther thinks her friends have a heart for the community and she sees potential in them to lead a Life Group. The problem is that they do not understand what a Life

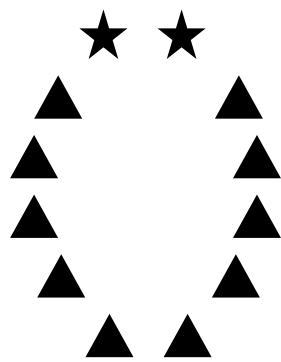
Group is and how God can work in their community. Esther’s friends attend her life group for at least one month.



Esther’s friends Lovemore and Glory have been attending the Life Group in Esther’s community for a month. Now is the time for them to start a group in their own community. Lovemore and Glory will need help from Esther and the original group leader.



Original group continues
with Esther in it



New group led by
Lovemore and Glory

Training and Prayer

If you are going to plant a Life Group it is really important to do two things. First, you must pray that God will help you to start the new Life Group, find the correct people and take down the barriers that will prevent a new Life Group starting. Those barriers may be spiritual problems or unhelpful attitudes in the community.

You must also train the people who will be starting the new Life Group. There are two parts to training people to lead Life Groups and you must do both of them.

The first part is to train the new Life Group leaders about ways to plant a new Life Group. That is happening using the “Multiplying the Group” and “Inviting Friends” methods of planting a group. This must always happen so new groups feel supported and you have a good friendship with original group.

The second part is to train by actually running a course for the new leaders. This book contains all the material that you will need for that course.

Using the Material

This training course can be used in two different ways.

1. In a group to train many people at once, such as a cluster of Life Group leaders and potential Life Group leaders.
2. Used person to person with a small group, typically less than 5 people.

Ways to work through the material

We suggest two different ways in which you can work through this material. You can choose the one that works best for the people in your group. It is important to choose a way that suits the people in your group best. In both cases you should start and close with a time of worship and prayer.

Option 1: Meet in a similar format to your regular Life Group.

This means you will meet for about 2 hours once a week, for 4 weeks. (This will normally be in addition to your weekly Life Group.) You should cover the following sessions each week.

Week 1: Session 1 - Water, Trees and Sky - Psalm 1 Devotion (30 minutes)

Session 2 - Life is through the family (1 hour)

Week 2: Session 3 - Running a Life Group in your Village (2 hours)

Week 3: Session 4 - Everyone has a place (1 hour)

Session 5 - Introduction to Materials (1 hour)

Week 4: Session 6 - Planning (1 hour)

Questions (upto 1 hour)

Option 2: Two morning sessions

If people prefer to have a short, intense time of learning, you can go through the material in 2 half days. You should be able to fit everything into a morning or afternoon session on each day.

Day 1: Session 1 - Water, Trees and Sky - Psalm 1 Devotion (30 minutes)

Session 2 - Life is through the family (1 hour)

Session 3 - Running a Life Group in your Village (2 hours)

Day 2: Session 4 - Everyone has a place (1 hour)

Session 5 - Introduction to Materials (1 hour)

Session 6 - Planning (1 hour)

Questions (up to 1 hour)

How to use the Training Notes

These notes contain every session that you will need to help people begin Life Groups. It is very important that you keep to these notes and follow what they tell you to do. A lot of thought and work has gone into developing these notes over many years. If you miss parts out, you will also miss out the benefit of that work.

Every session has various sections to guide you and make the session enjoyable for everyone who is taking part. These sections are identified by pictures and could involve speaking, questions, prayer or various different fun ways to learn.

The sessions have been designed to include participation from everyone whether through reading, discussion, drama or storytelling. We have found this to be a more effective way of teaching than simply talking at people.



Aim

Each session has 2 or 3 aims. This is to guide you in what you are teaching the group. You must always have these aims in mind and ask yourself if you are helping people reach them. You do not have to tell the group the aim at the start of the session.



Bible Passage

The picture of a book is for when you need to read a Bible passage aloud to the group. You may find it helpful to ask 1 or 2 in the group to read. Do this in advance so they can practice or say no. Be aware that some people cannot read. Asking them to read when they cannot may embarrass them.



Questions

Questions are a great way to get people involved in what they are learning. It is important that everywhere you see the question symbol you ask the question aloud to the group and encourage them to answer.



Activity

People learn through having fun. This is what activities are for. The activity symbol means you are meant to follow the group activity instructions.



Story

Stories are a brilliant way to introduce subjects and to learn from something that is familiar. Everyone likes a story! Wherever you see this symbol it is very important to tell the story as well and as accurately as you can. Try to be dramatic!



Hint

Sometimes we need to give you instructions and hints along the way. This symbol is a piece of information to guide you and not to share with group you are teaching.



Speaking

These are the sections where you are simply meant to talk to people, teaching them in a traditional way.



Prayer

What God says directly to people is extremely important. We want to encourage prayer wherever possible. When you see this symbol get people to pray. It is good to have group prayer and people praying for one another, praying different ways at different times.

Session 1: Water, Trees and Sky



Aim

This is a short Bible devotion lesson based upon Psalm 1. The key ideas are the following:

- We can think of our life like a tree, a planting of God, which has fruit.
- We only become a strong tree by drawing our strength from God.
- As we grow, we will do all kinds of works as we worship God.



Bible Passage

Psalm 1 is an introduction to the book of Psalms. It was probably added later to the Psalms and it is the author's introduction and first thought for the rest of the book. This makes it very important.

Read Psalm 1 aloud to the group.

Psalm 1

¹ *Blessed is the one*

*who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,*

² *but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night.*

³ *That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.*

⁴ *Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.*

⁵ *Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.*

⁶ *For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction."*



Question

Ask the group, what kinds of trees are strong and why they are strong? Then ask them, how does a tree become strong? (Think here of sunlight, water, lack of harm etc.)



Trees

Talk about how we can think of our life as being like a tree that produces fruit. God wants the tree to be strong and tall, producing the right kind of fruit at the right time. We can be morally and spiritually very strong bringing fruit to others. Say that we can also be a bad tree. We can produce no fruit and we can be very weak. We could be morally weak and very selfish for example.



Question

Ask the group, where do crops grow best? What do they need to grow? Is it the same as trees? The answer you are looking for is water. Along every river in Africa you will find trees as the moisture in the soil feeds the plants through their roots and causes the plants and trees to grow strong.



Explain that the water represents God's life which is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit wants to water and nourish the life of the trees (just like trees planted by the water) so that they can produce fruit and be strong. If our life is planted near to the Holy Spirit we will be like strong trees.

This Psalm is about two ways in life. One way is to please God and be a benefit to the community and your family. The other way is to displease God and to be selfish and not of benefit to your community.

Relating this to the Psalm, there is 1 path which is in the counsel of the Lord (v 1 - 3) and the other which is the wicked path (v 4 - 5). This decision is in front of us in everything we do in life.



Question

What different areas of our lives can we decide whether or not to follow God? Try and get people to think about more than just their own life, what about their community?

It is in all of these areas that we must think about the Word of God.



Verse by verse summary of the Psalm

We may or may not be born again and follow the Lord. This Psalm is about those that follow God and those who do not follow God. The psalm can also be used as a guide for every decision we will make in our ministry and in all aspects of our life.

Verse 1

*"Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers"*

The sinners and mockers are those who do not have belief in God. What is interesting is that standing in the way of sinners could be said to lead to mocking others and God. It is a place of pride. We think of ourselves as better and more deserving than others.

Verse 2

*"but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
and who meditates on his law day and night."*

There are two parts to this verse. To 'delight' in the law of the Lord means something that a person truly values God, His Word and His ways above everything else. The word 'meditate' means to read or ponder over. When a person gives thought to the word of God seeking to know what it means, that is meditation.

Those that follow God, are happy and joyful when they think about doing right and what God requires. They think about God's word every day. This brings about a change in them.

Verse 3

"That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,

*which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.”*

Those that delight in the Lord are planted near irrigation, fresh water that will sustain them. There are 3 elements to this:

They yield their fruit in season. Each of us have seasons where we are productive and seasons where we are less productive. This is natural.

Their leaf does not wither. Unlike a natural tree, in a dry place like a desert, those planted by the water will be able to withstand difficult times, their lives will not wither away.

Whatever they do prospers. This does not mean we will have lots of money, rather the Godly actions we take will find success.

The tree grows up and gives shade and fruit to everyone. It gives the right fruit at the right time and is resistant to problems that come its way.

This differs from the wicked.

Verse 4

*“Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.”*

The wicked are like chaff, little pieces of straw that the wind blows away. The wicked in this psalm means those who:

- Mock God
- Ignore God’s word
- Ignore God in the direction of their life

They are people who lack both life and substance. If the trials of this world are the wind then the wicked are not found planted, rooted by the

river, they are blown away and are of no wider use to God, their family or their community.

Verse 5

*"Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous."*

Many people believe that this refers to a final judgement where God will punish the wicked. This is not the case. It is talking about life in the here and now. The verse literally means that those who are not planted by the water will not be able to stand in this life, they will wither away. They will also be cut off from the community of God, the assembly of the righteous.

Verse 6

*"For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction."*

We want to be people that the Lord watches over, so we must be planted and rooted in His word. We do not want ourselves and our community to be destroyed, to wither away.



The Sky - Question

Ask the group how they can describe the sky. Look for answers like big, blue, wide open, high, beautiful.

Explain that God is much higher and more beautiful than the sky and our life is meant to be about worshipping him. To be a tree planted by the water means to be a tall tree with our branches pointing towards the sky in worship of God. This makes a difference to everyone.



Pray

Pray for everyone that we will be well rooted. Then worship God together.

Session 2: Life is Through the Family



Aim

The aims of this session are:

- To understand what the family of God is and how God works with it.
- To learn about unity.
- To learn what the family does together and how Life Groups do this.
- To think through how to begin a group in a village.



Story: The Chief's Banquet

There was once a Chief who invited many people from his Chiefdom to a very big banquet. People travelled from all over the area to the banquet as it was a very big occasion. Everyone wore their best clothes and brought a tribute for the Chief. There were so many people from so many different places. That made the Chief glad. He had invited them because he wanted to see his kingdom, the family of people that he ruled over.

After a couple of days he noticed that many of the people in his tribe argued. They argued over who was the best at keeping tradition. They argued about who sang the best songs. They even argued with people from the same village. It had even got to the place where different head men met with different people and people rarely came together.

The Chief was very disturbed by this. He wondered how his people could have become so divided. He decided to do something about it.

One night he assembled the head men of the various groups that had come together. Above a great room/hall he suspended a dagger from the ceiling. He said that the one head man that could reach the dagger alone could be chief. He would give his entire Kingdom to him.

The head men were very surprised and eagerly started to fight one another. Each one of them tried to climb the wall, but failed. Many of them were so busy fighting, that they forgot about getting the dagger completely. After an hour of this everyone was exhausted and discouraged.

Then the wise chief walked over and said, “Why do you think that any one of you can do this task? It is impossible, the ceiling is too high for you to reach.” He then assembled five men to stand on the ground, and instructed three others to stand on their shoulders, then a further two on top of them. The head men did as they were told and stood one on top of another. They could nearly reach, but not quite. The Chief himself then climbed on top of them and reached the dagger for himself.

Everyone knew what the Chief wanted to say. While they were busy fighting and arguing, trying to complete the task on their own they could not do it. It took everyone together to reach the dagger. Even the Chief himself needed the help of everyone to do it.



Question

Ask the group what they think the story of the Chief’s banquet means? The story is meant to be an example of what the church can be like in rural Africa. Look for answers that talk about overcoming division and working together.



This is a picture of what the Church is like in the villages of rural Africa. It can also be true of the Church anywhere. There is a great Chief who is God, and He looks upon us and sees His people, the Church, split up, fighting amongst ourselves and arguing about petty traditions. Just like the Chief in our story He wants to see his people, His tribe, united.

Whilst we are arguing, just like the head men forgot about the dagger, we forget about the task that we have. Many are suffering, many do not know God and we stand by either helping ourselves or arguing with one another.

Edmund Burke said, “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”¹ Whilst we are busy being distracted our enemy is building his own work, right under our very noses.

¹ Adapted from Burke, Edmund (1770) *Thoughts on the Cause of Present Discontents*, 3rd Edition, Pall Mall, J Dodsley



Bible Reading

These bible readings speak about a new identity and a new family that we are a part of. The book of John was written by John the Disciple who knew Jesus. Right at the beginning of his book he talks about family and who we are. It must have been important for him. The verses from Ephesians are from the Apostle Paul. He wrote a letter to the church in Ephesus.

Read the verses out loud to the group, or if some people have Bibles and can read, you can ask them to read.

John 1:10-13

“¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

Ephesians 2:19-22

“¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.”



Question

Ask everyone in the group if they have children. For those that do, ask them to describe how their children look like them.



A New Tribe

The question we have just asked shows how children are often like their parents. In the same way, God gives birth to everyone that is a Christian. We are all born of the same Spirit. We have been given the right to be children of God. Christians call this adoption into God’s family. When we

become a Christian, we are adopted into God's worldwide family.

Just like a family can adopt a child that is not biologically theirs into their family, God does the same for us. God makes us alive and adopts us into the family of God. We were fatherless spiritually, now we are not, we all have a Father who is God, the Lord of All. As we grow up we will look like our Father more and more.

Another way of saying this is that we are part of a new tribe of people. Whether we are Lunda, Lozi, Bemba, Nyanja, Shona, Ndebele, Tonga (you can use as many tribe names as you would like here). We are now all part of the tribe of Christ. No matter what denomination we are, what background we have, whether we are rich or poor or black or white, we are all part of the same tribe.

The verses in Ephesians help us to take this idea even further. In the Old Testament, the temple in Jerusalem was built to hold the presence of God. It was in the temple that the various religious ceremonies and rites were performed to God. In Ephesians, the Apostle Paul says that we are all part of the temple of God together, we are all parts of the building, with Christ as the cornerstone. A cornerstone is the most important stone. It is the stone laid first in a wall. Upon this stone, every piece of the wall is built.

We are all part of the building of God, the new tribe.



Question

Ask the group what use is a building when it is in pieces? Or a glass bowl that is in pieces? What can you do with it?



The building of God's people is a very special building. Like the temple it is a place where God's presence lives and has influence. If we are not together then God's work and presence is made less. We need each other in different denominations. We need different traditions. We need people different to us. Without them God's presence will not be as strong as it should.

Session 3: Running a Life Group in Your Village



Aim

This teaching session aims to teach how to practically run a Life Group in a village. The aims of the lesson are to:

- Teach that small groups work better than just preaching.
- Learn techniques of how to run a small group session.
- Learn how the Life Group can meet each week.



Story: The Hut is on Fire!

There was once a village deep in the bush. The rainy season had ended and the grass around the village was very long. Lots of snakes and small animals hid themselves in the grass from the hot sun.

Precious and Phiri were two young boys in the village. one of the things that they liked to do from day to day was to catch small animals like rats. To find them Precious would light a fire at one end of the bush and all the animals would come running towards Phiri for him to catch. They had endless fun doing this and caught some food too. They always cooked it and ate it afterwards!

Often Precious and Phiri disappeared on a Sunday morning. They found church boring and so very long.

One day Precious and Phiri were lighting fires, but unlike the other days it was windy. As the fire started to burn, the wind picked up and the fire started blazing much bigger than it ever had before. Before long the whole area of grass was on fire. It was out of control.

Precious and Phiri ran around trying to beat out the fire but it was just too hot for them. The flames were too large. Before long a group of huts had also caught fire. People's possessions were in danger.

Precious and Phiri ran to find some people to help them, but nobody seemed to be around. They remembered it was a Sunday and that everyone was at church.

By the time they got to the church building, the sermon had started. The men were sitting on one side and the women on the other. They were all listening to the pastor who was preaching. Precious and Phiri tried to interrupt many times, but each time they were told by everyone to be quiet and not to interrupt. It seemed no one would listen to them.

Eventually the pastor got sick of them and ordered them to leave the building. Two of the ushers came to make sure they were quiet. At this point Precious just shouted, “You do not understand. Your huts are burning down!” Everyone was shocked and everyone panicked as they ran out to see what was going on.

True enough, many huts were on fire. The people from the church started to work together to put the fire out. They did manage to save many huts and the possessions within them. Some of the huts were burnt down together with the entire livelihood of the families who lived in them.

The people were angry and they asked, “Why didn’t you tell us?” Precious and Phiri started to cry. “We tried”, they said, “but you would not listen. You were too busy listening to the sermon to listen to us.” Even though Precious and Phiri had accidentally started the fire, they were quickly forgiven and everyone helped together to assist those who had lost everything. Everyone vowed that they would listen to each other more carefully from now on!



Question

Ask the group what they think the story means? Expect answers like it is important to work together. The answer you are specifically looking for is that it is important to listen and to learn from one another. If people had listened to Precious and Phiri in the first place, maybe things would have been different. If Precious and Phiri had a place in the Church to begin with the fire may never have started.



Small Groups in the Bible

In the Bible we read about Christians meeting together in small groups in homes and other places. A small group is exactly like the Life Group that

we have been talking about so far in our course. It is a group of people who meet together regularly to:

- study the Bible
- share their lives together
- remember Jesus and have communion together
- pray together
- be generous, giving their money and time
- worship together
- witness together ²

As we have seen these are exactly the practices that we use with Life Groups.

A lot of people wonder where the idea of small groups comes from. It comes from the early Christian practice that we see it in the Bible. The original churches in the Bible were not large churches, typically being less than 50 people. When you read the letter to the Galatians for example, it was probably written to a much smaller group of people than you imagine.

Christian groups met in homes, outside in the temple courts or even in synagogues (Jewish churches). They did not necessarily have a church building like we may have today. In fact, there is not really a mention of Christian church buildings in the New Testament. Christians tended to meet as small groups of people in homes. We will take a look at 2 examples from the Bible.



Bible Reading

The churches in the Books of Romans and Philemon were in Rome and probably the city of Colossae. These churches met in people's houses, not church buildings.

² Pastors.com/Rick Warren, 2012. Seven Marks of a Healthy Small Group [ONLINE] Available at <http://pastors.com/seven-marks-of-a-healthy-small-group> [Accessed 28 June 2017]

Romans 16:3-5

³Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus. ⁴They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. ⁵Greet also the church that meets at their house. Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.”

Philemon 1:2

²also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier – and to the church that meets in your home”

It is completely acceptable to meet in a small group like a Life Group in your village. It is a very biblical practice to carry out.



Activity: Wheelbarrow Race

Get four volunteers and get them to have a “wheelbarrow race”. This is where one person is standing up holding the legs of their partner who, with their hands in front of them on the floor, is like a wheelbarrow. Let people in the group have different races. Explain that in the race we need one another and we need to work together if we are to win. This is like in a Life Group where working together is the best way.



Life Groups help us to be Christ in our Village

In a Life Group we can:

- easily see if someone is struggling or missing
- help people put our faith into action together (like in the wheelbarrow race)
- all learn together
- listen to each other (like in the story, The Hut is on Fire!)



Bible Reading

The letter of James is full of practical advice and wisdom. One of his main concerns is that people put their faith in to action and not just talk about it!

James 1:22-25

²²Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it – not forgetting what they have heard but doing it – they will be blessed in what they do.”



Question

Ask the group what they think the Bible passage means. Answers like putting the Word of God into practice should be encouraged. Ask them how they think a Life Group can help them to do this. This will help you to measure the group’s understanding.

Break – This is the place where the session can be broken into two parts.



How to Lead a Life Group

Explain that in this part of the session we are going to learn how to actually organise and lead the Life Group.

Where and When to Meet

A Life Group can meet anywhere in the village. They could meet under a tree, in a school, in a hut or even in a field. The important consideration is that it is a place where everyone is comfortable meeting and happens at a time where everyone can meet. You may want to avoid a church building if that will put out people off coming.

How to run the Life Group meetings

In a church service the preacher speaks A LOT and the people listen. Sometimes the people do not understand and sometimes they may be tired and even stop listening. Usually there is no time for people to ask questions. The people learn from the leader.

In a Life Group the leader will speak A LITTLE to explain things. There will be a chance to discuss and talk with others about what it means. People

will be able to ask questions. People will be able to pray together about the things they struggle with or the ways they want to be able to serve Jesus better. There will be a chance for people to take what the Bible says and think about what it means in their lives.³



Activity: The Ball Game⁴

This game should be played out once in front of everyone and then everyone should be encouraged to play the game together. For this game you will need a small ball. If you have not got one you could use a chimbombwe (plastic bag football), rolled up socks, an apple or even an orange. You need something that you can easily throw around.

Make a group of eight people at the front of the room. Start playing with the ball in the way described as you read the script.

Play the ball game on your own

(Throw the ball up and catch it again lots of times while you are talking.)

If I play the ball game on my own then I am having fun but no one else is learning how to play. After a short time people will get bored of watching me play on my own. (Encourage the group you have at the front to look bored and keep throwing and catching the ball yourself to make the point). This is what it is like when the group leader does too much talking. After a while people will stop listening and will only understand a little.

Play the ball game with one other person

(Throw the ball back and forwards to one person in the group whilst you are talking.)

If I play the ball game with another person they are starting to understand what the ball game is like. Perhaps they are asking questions or perhaps they are explaining what the Bible passage means for their life. They are involved in the game. However, it is just about me and that

³ Example of 'Speaking a Little and a Lot' taken from equivalent session in Rooted in Jesus Team Training Manual. Revd. Dr. A. Morgan. The Mathetes Trust. (www.rootedinjesus.net)

⁴ This activity taken from The Alpha Course Training Session: How to lead a Small Group. Alpha International.

one person. Everyone else is not involved and I am the one who is still doing all of the teaching and talking.

Play the ball game with everyone

(Start throwing the ball to each member of the small group in turn with the ball coming back to you each time.)

In a Life Group it is better if everyone is involved. Now it is like every member of the group has a chance to ask questions and say what the Bible passage means in their life. Everyone is learning. Everyone is involved. This is better.

Play the ball game with everyone but differently

(Start throwing the ball to each member of the small group in turn but encourage them to throw it across to others before throwing it back to you.)

An even better way is if it is not always the leader answering all the questions. It is better if sometimes people answer each other's questions and explain how they have managed problems in their own life. This is a better ball game.



Question

Ask the group which way of running the group they think is best and why.



Activity: Repeat the Ball Game in Groups

(You will need 1 ball for each group.)

This time split everyone in the room into groups of around 8 people.

Choose a person in each group to act as the organiser. A few times, call out one of the four ways the group could play and ask them to throw the ball around in the same way you did. It is a little bit of fun, and underlines the point as everyone is involved and doing it themselves.

It is important to meet people in between Life Group meetings

It is very important that our encouragement together is not just in the meeting we have. It may be that someone has a problem or needs to be encouraged in a ministry. As the organiser of the group you should visit the members of the group every week or so. This also applies to people

who attend the group and are not yet Christians. Visit them, share time with them encouraging them. This will encourage them.

Common problems and how to solve them

There can be problems in some groups that the leader must deal with to make the group stronger. If a group starts to run badly people will not be encouraged to come.

To illustrate this, ask the eight people who came to the front in the ball game to come up again. We are going to show some more examples.

The Person who does too much talking

(Throw the ball back and forwards to one person to remind people.)

Often in a group there is at least one person who likes to answer every question and comment on everything. They can talk so much that others do not get a chance to say anything.

What do you as a leader do about this? What can you say to make them stop?

If you said, "John you have talked too much stop talking now" how would that make John feel? He would be offended and maybe he would not come back to the group.

Instead you can say something like, "That was a good answer John but what does everyone else have to say about that?" John will not be offended but will know he must now be quiet to let everyone else speak.

(Now stop throwing the ball to just one person and throw to others also.)

A shy person who does not answer questions or speak

(Throw the ball round the group missing one person.)

What can you say to help this person speak?

If you said, "Why don't you speak, are you stupid?" Anna will feel stupid and will probably not come again. Instead say something like, "Anna you

look like you might have some good ideas. Have you got anything to say about this?" She may then feel free to be able to speak.

Sometimes people will say, "No I do not want to speak." If this is so let them carry on listening. Often after the groups have been going a short while these people will become more confident and may start joining in discussions in later weeks.

(Throw the ball round the group again including the quiet person.)

You can now ask your group of volunteers to sit down.

The person who says that an answer is wrong

If someone says something like, "I don't believe Jesus is God."

Then you can respond by saying something like, "I used to believe that until I met him and he changed my life" or, "Some of us here believe differently, let's carry on studying and see what the Bible has to say."

If someone says something completely crazy you can say something like, "That is interesting I've never heard anyone say that before."

How do you think they would feel if you said, "You are wrong, how can you believe that!" It will make them feel very bad.

They probably will not ever come back to the group again and you will have lost the opportunity to share the truth of Jesus with them. Do not worry about people knowing everything in the first week. Very few of us suddenly came to know Jesus. Most of us learnt little by little.

The group not running consistently or on time

Life group sessions should be no more than 2 hours. This way people can attend them easily. They should also be at the same time each and every week. If we do not meet every week people lose heart. If they run inconsistently people are likely to give up. Even in rural Africa where time can be more flexible, these things are important.

People oppose our Life Group

Sometimes people will oppose our Life Group in the village. People become suspicious easily. The best way to overcome this is to communicate well with people and to pray about it. Be open about what you do and how you do it. Take time to explain it to people. If you hear anything that is incorrect make sure you go and explain correctly to the person you heard it from. We have seen this situation being overcome many times.



Summary

Recount the story of Precious and Phiri, and how they would have been stronger and more effective if people had listened to one another. Remind the group about the ball game and about the various points of how a Life Group can run in the village.



Pray

Ask people to get into their village groups. Ask everyone to pray together out loud and ask that God will help them to start a Life Group in their village.

Then ask the group if they have heard God say to them that they need to change the way they do things in their village. If so, get them to stand up and pray that God will help them to see everyone as an equal, to learn from others and to serve people.

Session 4: Everyone has a Place



Aim

This teaching session aims to help people understand how the family of God can work together in their village.

- To understand what the Body of Christ is
- To understand that everyone in Christ is equal
- To understand how a Life Group physically works in their village



Hint

When telling the story of the Big Cabbage, make sure that people are lined up across the front of the room so that everyone can see clearly. Make sure you give group volunteers plenty of guidance of where to stand and what to do.



Story: The Big Cabbage

There was a big cabbage in the ground. It was so large that the farmer could not wait to pull it out and sell it for lots of money.

So the farmer went to pull it out.

(Pick a participant to be the farmer and ask them to act out being the farmer, going to the field to pull out the vegetable.)

He pulled *(the person pulls)*, he pulled *(the person pulls)* and he pulled *(the person pulls)*. But NO! He cannot pull the cabbage out.

The farmer wonders who can help him, so he thinks “I will go and get my wife.” *(Encourage your volunteer to go and pick a wife from the audience.)*

When the wife has been chosen, she must stand in a line behind the farmer and help him pull. *(If the volunteers are happy to, it is good to stand behind the farmer in a line holding the waist of the person in front. This looks like you are pulling together. You should continue to tell the story and guide the volunteers.)*

Now go through trying to pull out the vegetable again. This repeats, adding people one at a time to make a long line trying to pull out the large cabbage.

The farmer and wife cannot pull it out so the wife goes to get the son.

The farmer, wife and son cannot pull it out so the son goes to get the daughter.

The farmer, wife, son and daughter cannot pull it out so the daughter goes to get the dog.

The farmer, wife, son, daughter and dog cannot pull it out so the dog goes to get the cat.

The farmer, wife, son, daughter, dog and cat cannot pull it out so the cat goes to get the mouse.

With the mouse, they can finally pull the cabbage out.

The volunteers get a round of applause.

Encourage everyone back to their seats and get everyone to cheer.



Question

Ask the group what they think the point of the story is? There are two answers that you want to make sure everyone understands:

- We need to work together.
- The weakest person is just as important as the strongest.

From experience groups tend to understand the working together part of the story, but do not understand the fact that the contribution of the weakest is very important.



Bible Reading

The letters to the churches in Galatia and the Corinthians were both written by the Apostle Paul. In his letters, unity, working together and equality are themes that occur many times. This means that they are important. It is very important to read both passages completely. You may want to connect the passage in Galatians to the story of the Big Cabbage that we have just heard. The passage in Corinthians follows on from this.

Galatians 3:26-29

²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

1 Corinthians 12:12-31

¹² Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body – whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free – and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ And so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

¹⁵ Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I don't need you!' And the head cannot say to the feet, 'I don't need you!' ²² On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³ and the parts that we

think are less honourable we treat with special honour. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty,²⁴ while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honour to the parts that lacked it,²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.²⁸ And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues.²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?³⁰ Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?³¹ Now eagerly desire the greater gifts."



We all have a part to play

Every one of us who lives in the village and knows Christ, can be used by Him to do wonderful things. There is a belief that you must be experienced, a pastor or an evangelist to do anything for God. There is also a belief that ordinary members of a congregation do not have the permission to do acts for God in their community. This is not true at all!

Let us think about the verses in Galatians that we have just read. The point of these verses is that we all have the same Lord Jesus Christ, there can be no division among us. Whether in tribe, importance, race, education or anything else. We are all absolutely equal in the sight of God. A pastor cannot simply tell his congregation what to do, his authority should not be like that. A richer member of a congregation does not get more say than a poorer member. The fact that we are all equal means we should run our churches and Life Group in an equal manner.

The Apostle Paul uses the example of our own body to help us to understand this. 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 is a description of the Body of Christ. Every person, every part is crucial to the smooth running of our body.



Question

What does this mean for the way things should be run in our churches and for us and the Life Groups that we wish to start in our village? Give everyone 5 minutes in small groups of 3-4 people to talk about this. If time allows have a short time of feeding back.



A fantastic fact in the letter to the Corinthians is that the weakest or least honourable parts of the body are given special honour. This means that those parts we think are the weakest or the least presentable (everyone will know what those parts mean!) are in fact the parts that God honours. The way God thinks about people in our groups and village is completely different to the way we think about them. It is upside down with the least important people first.

The little toe may seem very unimportant. You may believe that you could get a panga (machete) and just cut it off and it would not make a difference. You would be very wrong. Without the little toe it is hard to balance. People who lose their little toe need to learn to walk all over again.

Or what about your thumb? It is not a large or powerful part of the body. However, if you lose it you cannot easily pick items up and use them. Even though it is small it is extremely important!

We are all to use our gifts

Being equal in the body with Christ as the head, means that we all have gifts and have a contribution to make. If we look at the passage in Corinthians we see some examples:

- apostles
- prophets
- teachers
- miracles
- healing
- helping
- guidance

- speaking in tongues

There are many more gifts mentioned in the Bible. In this list Paul is giving examples to the Corinthian Church. He asks whether any one person do all of these things? The answer is no!

In the same way we need one another and the gifts that God has given each of us. Together we are stronger and so we can do what He asks us to do more effectively.

Those outside the Church are not to be left out!



Bible Reading

Matthew wrote down the events in Jesus' life for us so we could understand what was important to Him. This reading is an example where Jesus embraces those who are outside of God's people and spends time with them. This is very important to God.

Matthew 9:9-13

⁹ *As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.*

¹⁰ *While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.* ¹¹ *When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'*

¹² *On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.* ¹³ *But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"*



Question

What does this mean for how we relate to people outside of the church? Are they to be treated as outsiders or are they to be encouraged to be part of the family? Give everyone 5 minutes in small groups of 3-4 people

to talk about this. If time allows have a short time of feeding back.



Often in the Church and Christianity, we stay away from those who we see as 'sinners'. We believe that we should keep away from them. We believe that some of them are evil people and will somehow corrupt us if we spend time with them. This simply is not true and it is not what Jesus has ever asked us to do.

In this example Jesus has dinner with those who were tax collectors and sinners. Tax collectors were seen as incredibly evil people. The place where he lived, now known as Israel, was occupied by the Roman Army. People hated this. Tax collectors worked for the Romans, collecting money and giving it to the Romans. They also often cheated and were corrupt and kept plenty of money for themselves. They were one of the most hated groups of people in Palestine. Yet Jesus went out of his way to spend time with them.

Not only are we meant to be a body where everyone is equal. We are also meant to be a body that welcomes those outside to join in. We invite people to spend time with ourselves and Christ. Our Life Groups should be open to ANYONE in the wider community, no matter who they are and no matter what they have done.

Jesus came not to those who knew Him, but to those who did not know Him. We are to do the same.



Question

Ask the group what types of people are normally shunned or left out in our village? Briefly talk about how we can include them.



Hint

This part of the session is extremely important. Do not just read this out, people in the group must see how it can work and what could happen. To help them to understand this, it must happen in front of them. There is a saying that "A picture paints a thousand words!"



Activity

This activity shows how a Life Group can work. It also shows how encouraging the different gifts of people can be when used together and how they can make the life and work of the ministry stronger.

At the front of the teaching room, ask 2 volunteers to come to the front. Explain that these are 2 people who have decided to organise a Life Group in their village.

Ask your 2 volunteers to go and pick another 8 people, who will be their group members. They must all then stand at the front in a line, facing the audience.

Explain that this is the Life Group and over the last 6 months, they have been meeting week by week together. They meet on a Tuesday afternoon, from 15 to 17, and between 10 and 16 people attend each week. They come from different churches and they have been using the material provided to them in the training.

Explain that there are different types of people in this group. (The different types of people are listed here and you need to introduce each type of person. Make sure you are explaining and helping all of your volunteers.)

An organiser and a helper

Together they decided to start the group. They spoke to friends and invited different people from different churches and the wider community. Over a period of 6 months everyone in the group has grown. All of the people are still from different churches, in fact 2 of them still do not go to church but they are thinking about it.

2 people who know about teaching children

They saw lots of children in the village. Every week they see how the children are left on the fringes of church. They decide to do something about this and every week they have now started to teach about Jesus and have fun with the children in the village. This happened because they

were encouraged to use their gifts and the organiser of the group encouraged them to do it!

Another person who is a good teacher

This person understands the material quickly and has even had a few attempts at leading the study himself. The organiser asks him to see if he and a friend can go to neighbouring village and start a Life group there, teaching other people. (Remember we talked earlier in this book about “Multiplying a Group”)

3 people who are gardeners

1 of them has an idea to cultivate some land and then to help the poor by growing food. 2 others in the group decide to help him.

2 people who are not Christians yet

They come to the group every week. They are moving closer to Jesus.

As the group grows we discover our gifts and with the right encouragement the work of God in our village grows. (Keep stressing the point until they get it.)

Thanks the volunteers and ask them to return to their seats.



Only we can make it happen!

The only people that can reach and help the village is the Life Group. They are the people God has chosen in the village to love and help others. The Bible calls these people, strong trees of righteousness (Isaiah 61:3). There is a big problem that stops people working and doing something for themselves. That is when we are hoping people from the outside will do something for us. This means that we are not willing to do anything ourselves and we are simply waiting for something that may never come.

Now sit down (in the audience) and wait for something to happen. Do this until it starts to become uncomfortable, maybe for 2 minutes. Ask the group, what will happen if you continue to sit there? The answer is nothing.

In the same way, if we cannot bring ourselves to start and run a Life Group maybe nothing will happen in our community.



Pray

We need to pray that God will break disunity, rivalry and un-forgiveness in our village. Get the group in to small groups of 3-4. In particular pray that:

- God would unite the different churches through starting a Life Group
- There would be no rivalry
- Any past incidents will be forgiven

Next ask people to pray for their wider community. Think of the different people in the community and ask God to bring them closer to Himself.

Ask for the Holy Spirit to bring forgiveness between people who are praying together.

Session 5: Introduction to Materials



Aim

This is a practical session aimed at making sure everyone is familiar with the training materials you use and is able to use them well.



Hint

This is an informal session. You should bring with you copies of the materials Life Groups are using and distribute these to the people attending.

You should already know the materials well as you will have been using them with any Life Groups you run. It is likely that the people you are training will also be familiar with the materials.

Start by sharing something you like about the materials you have shared with them.

Next give everyone a chance to look through them for a few minutes.



Activity

A good activity to do is to ask everyone in the group to have a go at leading a typical section from the materials. You could use one session and ask different people to lead different items. For example, one person could teach a memory verse, another person could lead a discussion and another could lead a time of prayer.

You should encourage people after they have tried and tell them what they did well and gently share any ideas for how they could improve.

You probably will not have time to go through a whole session, but by doing some of a session people will get a chance to see how they can use the materials.

Session 6: Planning



Aim

This is a practical session aimed at planning how the group will start Life Groups in their area and when they will do it. The aims of the session are:

- For the course members to make plans for Life Groups.
- To understand their next steps forward.
- To learn about planning.
- The importance of using what God has given to us.



The following Bible passage is taken from the book of Matthew. The story is about using the responsibility you have been given diligently and wisely. The passage refers to bags of gold which can be read to mean our talents, gifts and abilities. The man who uses it well is rewarded, the one who is frightened and does not serve his master is punished.

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²²The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you

entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more.'

²³His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²⁴Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.'

²⁶His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.'

²⁸So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' "



We have a responsibility to use the gifts and knowledge that God has given to us. Explain that this session is very important as we will make some plans to use our talents (like the bags of gold in the passage). We want to be like the faithful servant, not the lazy one!



Bible Reading: Some verses about planning

The following verses are taken from the Bible and give us a few reasons why we should plan. Read them out, explaining each one to the group.

Proverbs 15:22

²²Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed."

Proverbs 16:3

³Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans."

Proverbs 20:18

¹⁸Plans are established by seeking advice; so if you wage war, obtain guidance.”

Proverbs 21:5

⁵The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.”

We need to start the group and then, using the books and materials provided, make it easier for people to come closer to Jesus. We should not expect someone else to do this task, we should be committed to it ourselves.

Through our work, God can change our village.



The 4 verses we have just read about planning tell us to do the following:

- make plans
- obtain guidance and counsel
- commit everything we do to the Lord
- be diligent

So what plans do we need to make?

We have each come from different villages and different backgrounds. We have an opportunity to do something very good and godly in our village. We can work towards starting Life Groups in our village.

This means that we go back to our area and begin to gather people together in a group. These people need to be from different church backgrounds and from the wider community. We may need to speak to various community leaders to make it happen.



Activity: Make Plans

It is very important to make sure that people are in the correct village area groups that they have travelled from for this activity. Together the group will make plan of how they can begin a Life Group in their village.

Who can help you and who do you need to talk to?

Get each group to take an piece of A4 paper and to draw a circle in the middle. This circle represents the village where they live. Tell them to write the name of the village at the top of the circle.

Then ask each group to draw circles that represent different groups of people in their village on their piece of paper. These groups of people could be a church, representatives of the chief, mothers or teachers for example. It is very important that they understand that they must list every group in their village. This is so they can invite people from that group.

Get them to write the names of each group of people in the village at the top of each circle.

Explain that this represents an aerial view of their area. Imagine they are a fish eagle hovering above the village looking down.

Within each circle on the paper that represents a group of people get the groups to write the names of perhaps 3-5 people who could be invited to join them in their Life Group. It is important to get a wide group of people so it truly is a village group.

Using their piece of paper, ask the groups to look at the names they have written down. The people who are here at this conference from your village should be in this list. Mark or star next to two or three people who can help you to run the group. Think about what they can do to help. You are looking for strong, dependable Christians who will have the right heart.

You now have a starting point for your Life Group with some potential leaders as well as potential members who can be invited.

You will need to invite people and make time to do this.

When and where

The next stage is to decide when and where the group could meet. This should be written down at the top of the A4 piece of paper with the circles on it so it does not get forgotten. Remind everyone that they should think about a neutral place for people to meet and that it should be at a convenient time. This date should be in the next 4 weeks.

As this is about people, remind them not to just send a message. They must go and see these people, in person, together. Talking to people in person and asking them for their commitment makes things happen.

Meet to pray: an important task!

Explain that it is important to plan a meeting every month to pray for each other and discuss how the planning and the Life Groups are going. Ask each group to write down when that will happen in the top left of their piece of paper.

Ask some advice

What we are going to do now is to compare our plans and in groups of 4 talk about what difficulties we may encounter. Split the delegates into groups of 4, preferably from different areas this time, and ask them to list the difficulties that they may think they will encounter. Allow five minutes for this task.

When they have done this, let them discuss about how to overcome these difficulties. It is important here that the people leading the conference/Impact Team members spend time with each group feeding in a bit of experience. This can also be done when the groups the feedback.

Then allow the groups to feedback vocally to one another.

Allow five to ten minutes for these tasks.



Pray: Commit to the Lord (10 mins)

Have a prayer time for each area represented. This way we will commit each place and the plans we have made to the Lord. Do this by moving people around to pray for each other. This helps to ensure everyone is involved and stays focused.



Be diligent

This section is to talk about the importance of being committed and doing what we say. Diligence is what makes the difference between something working and something not working.



Bible Reading: Some verses about diligence

These verses from the Bible speak about diligence and joy.

Romans 12:6-8

⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."



Activity

Now in the groups of 4 you were last in ask the people to explain to one another what you have committed yourself to. Encourage people to be detailed and specific, recalling names and days as this will help them remember plans and be more committed to them. You could suggest that people could even swap phone numbers and decide to SMS one another to make sure that they have both done what they have said they will do.



Summary

Remind the groups of the plans they have made. Remind them to pray for one another and to be diligent. Make sure that they know that they have support in the form of Impact Teams and that we will do whatever we can to help.



Pray

With Group Prayer get everyone to pray for each area in turn. Pray that their plans will come to be reality.

Notes



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