



# Small Groups Sometimes Skip the Agenda

by Dan Lentz

The basic small-group agenda may vary depending on the values of your ministry and the types of small groups you have, but remember that what happens in the small-group time and in between small-group gatherings will determine people's perception of small-group life. Make that perception the correct one right off the bat. It is much easier to model the correct Christian community lifestyle initially than to correct a bad experience later.

But remember—agendas are never the most important element of your small group.

## When agendas clash with reality

A small-group leader can have the best long-term plan and run the mechanics of the group agenda with skill and precision, but that doesn't guarantee a life-changing small-group experience. In the end, agendas don't change lives; Christ does.

Terminal illness, divorce, parenting issues, financial stress—the list of human problems that will not be on a small-group leader's meeting agenda seems endless. When thinking about the people who face these struggles, one of the biggest jobs of a small-group leader is not so much to be a teacher, but rather a navigator. As author Tom Bandy puts it, small-group leaders are "midwives" who are constantly coaching the painful birth of something new that God is doing in group members' lives.

A leader's response to people's struggles is not necessarily, "Can I help you find a solution to this pain?" or, "What knowledge or scriptural application do you lack that would make your situation better?" Rather, we are often far more helpful when we say, "Can I help this new thing to be born and to grow in you?"

The key to helping group members navigate through the chaos of life involves helping them process the love and truth of an infinite God, while dealing with any number of finite human problems. When people do not wrestle with that intersection, it leaves them feeling disconnected and makes the chaos seem as pronounced as ever.

Small-group leaders can help bring some order to the chaos. At any given time and in any given situation, the Christian leader can help position group members in between the finite and the infinite. A leader can ask simple questions, such as the ones below, to help group members that are hurting position themselves correctly.

- "Would you be open to discovering what the Bible says about your life in this

circumstance?"

- "Where has your story and God's story intersected recently?"
- "If you really believed the Word we have studied tonight, how would it change your life?"
- "What is God saying to you right now?"
- "How will you live differently tomorrow because of what we have talked about today?"

## How can group leaders get all of this accomplished?

As you look over your small-group values—things like fellowship, discipleship, service, and outreach—it is unlikely, even with the best agenda, that your leaders will get all of them accomplished in an hour and a half once a week. This is particularly true when individual needs of group members surface that require the group to postpone the meeting agenda and rally around someone in need of God's special touch.

So, you need to develop and train leaders to think in terms of finding a rhythm to community where these things can be incorporated into group life over time. For instance, let's say service is one of the core values on the small-group agenda. Group members can certainly serve one another daily, but if a leader wants the group to practice this value, he needs to occasionally plan a service activity for the group to do together.

That might not be practical at every group gathering, of course, so instead he can plan a service project once every couple of months. Better yet, designate someone in the group with gifting in service and administration to coordinate a service project on a regular basis. If a leader doesn't plan ahead, things fall off the radar screen and the group agenda doesn't get accomplished, values don't get instilled into group members, and small groups tend to lose focus. They become ingrown and hard to sustain over the long haul.

And remember, Jesus is the real leader of every small group. Continuously encourage leaders to pray and rely fully on his Spirit at work in their groups as they do life together.

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# Life group prayer and praises

- **Rich Carroll** of Lake Shore Community Church, Vancouver, WA sends this prayer request: My wife **Launda** is facing a liver biopsy tomorrow. Possibilities are an infection, or a cancer. This is all a very sudden development today. I'll update when I have more.
- Please pray for **Wayne Gentry**, pastor at Crow Community Baptist Church in Crow Agency, MT. He is in a hospital in Billings, MT with a heart arrhythmia issue. He is expected to be in for a few days and will be taking medication for a blood clot that is in the heart area. Wayne is resting and doing well. He expects to preach on Sunday. Also pray for his wife Bella and their children.
- Please pray for the **River Christian Church**, the newest church in the ABCNW.
- **Rev. Adair Krack** is home resting. The tests showed no blockages or damage to his heart. Praise God! The doctors concluded that his symptoms are related to an ear infection that he has had for 5 weeks. The infection has become resistant to the antibiotics he is taking and worsened. Do continue to pray for Adair and the doctors as they deal with the infection.
- My friend, **Mark Wexelberg**, was in a bad motorcycle accident. Pray for his recovery as he suffered many broken bones. Yet God protected his neck and back from trauma. He and his wife are strong Christians and are believing God for complete recovery. Pray for their young son, **Christian** (4-1/2 years old) who is not understanding the whole situation. ~**Christen W.**
- Pray for my friend's father **Jim Bender** who has stage 3 prostate cancer. Prayer that his treatment will be successful and that throughout all this that he will find the Lord. ~**Judy Warren**
- Please pray for my brother who is not feeling well, jobs, and my daughter who I miss and wish was here. ~ **Peter Johnson**
- Praise God! Thanks to all who prayed for **my sister Mary**, She got the best possible results about her blood disease! ~ **Darlene Hegeberg**
- **PJ Conner** asks that we pray for **Jake Huber**.
- **Tracey Ayers-Tate** just received her layoff notice from Boeing, please pray that she can find another job quickly.
- Please pray for the **Roullier** family the Lord's provision for them in their current house situation.
- I need prayer to strengthen me as **Nina's father Alex** moves here to Washington with his new wife, he is going to sue for custody. ~**Darcy Stanyo**
- Our **students** will be taking a mission trip to Mexico this summer from July 10-20. We will be working with **Pastor Gama** at a Children's camp in Merida, Mexico. It will be a lot of hard work but will be very rewarding as we are expanding our understanding of the Kingdom of God. It will be an honor for the leaders and students of the trip to go as representatives of First Baptist Church. Please continue to keep our team in your prayers.
- Please continue to pray for **Leanne Durham**, the oral chemo treatment she is taking is working! And she has had no ill effects from it and no new symptoms—Praise God all is going well.

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## Pray for our military

- *Jonathan Michaels Estrella— son of Sharon Boswell.*
- *Jason Bjazevich—Megan Owenby's husband—Army Special Forces— Stationed at Fort Lewis.*
- *Joel Ellis—son of John & Midge—Serving in Iraq.*
- *Scott Harpell—son of Brian & Lynne—Stationed at Fort Bragg.*
- *Aaron Weston—nephew of Ken and Kathy—Stationed in San Diego.*
- *Eric Schmidt — son of Gene and Pat Schmidt — Camp Fallujah, Iraq.*
- *Benjamin Lagonia—dear friend of the Naylor family—stationed in Manitoba.*
- *Elijah Austin —Ashley Naylor's husband—a Marine—Stationed at 29 Palms in California.*
- *David Coyle—son of Karen Mark—residing in Seattle, member of the National Guard.*
- *Adam Flynn—a young Marine going back for his second tour in Iraq.*
- *Brett Love—grandson of Wilma— Army National Guard-Serving second tour in Iraq.*
- *Robin Swartz - Serving in the military - currently home in Everett.*
- *Christian Chmielewski—nephew of JoAnn Couturie' - in the Marines.*
- *Jeffrey Lillard—son of Barbara Lillard — Srg. In Army, Stationed at Fort Lewis.*
- *ENS Andrew E. Timpner (fiancé to Christin Suthard) on deployment with USS Momsen.*

# Life Group Happenings

all in the family

by *florence miller*

**Lorren Olsen** went home to be with his Lord on Monday, March 30th. His memorial will be on April 13th here at FBC at 2:00 pm. Our prayers and sympathy go out to his family, wife **Arlene** and his aunt, **Lois Hudspeth**. He will be missed by all here at FBC.

**Ethel Knight** has suffered two heart attacks. She is at home, resting, but the family requests no phone calls nor visits. I'm sure cards would be appreciated along with our prayers.

It was good to see **Cliff Hudspeth** at church Sunday, putting his new pace maker to the test. Isn't God's science wonderful?!

The **Clipper Class** room is being painted. **David and Mary Miller** are the moving force behind that project. Also, three returning Sunday visitors to the class who live at the Mission offered their services for this week. Soon it won't appear, from the walls, that we are in the Toddler's Room. (Although some of us in that class do toddle somewhat!)

The weekly Tribune newspaper had a full page article about our own **Erik Linder**, his partner Rickie Taylor and his parents, **Holly and Lars**. Erik and Rickie have been invited to represent the United States in the eight member dance team competing at the Blackpool Dance Festival, International Ballroom and Dance Competition this April in England. They will compete in the Latin

dance category. Also, in April the pair will compete at Nationals in Baltimore dancing in the Latin category. Not only are Erik and Rickie competitors but Erik's parents, Holly and Lars took first place last year in the senior one pre-championship competition in Baltimore. This year they are in competition for the national title. They have been competing for three years.

**Lois and Lyle Pickard** are grieving for their **son-in-law, Alan, (daughter Marilee's husband,)** who suffered a massive stroke and is completely paralysed. He is only 59 years old. He is at the present time in Evergreen Hospital. We need to keep our conversations with the Lord on-going for all these friends.

Congratulations **Thiessens**—Update on the **Thiessen** girls: Born Friday, March 27th. **Emily Nicole** arrived @ 11:20 am weighing 6lbs and 17 inches. **Rachel Elizabeth** arrived @ 11:25 am weighing 6lbs 9oz and 17 inches. Mom, Dad and girls are all doing GREAT and babies are feeding well. They are at Group Health Hospital on Capital Hill in Seattle, room #311. **Krystal** and the girls will be coming home on Sunday.

**Wendy Roullier** is in room 802 at Providence Colby until probably Sunday or Monday for her broken ankle. Thursday evening she was watching **Jeffrey's** baseball team warm up. One of the balls was thrown over the fence. So like a good mom, she jumped off of

the bleachers to retrieve it. When her foot hit the ground, it essentially dislocated from the rest of her leg and broke 3 bones (snap, crackle & pop). Her leg went immediately numb from her toe to her knee. When the fire truck arrived it blocked off half the intersection of 23rd and Walnut and they stabilized her in splint and awaited the ambulance, which blocked the other half of the intersection when it arrived. Then she was transported to the ER at Colby.

**Sarah Canada**—daughter to **Lisa and Len Salmon**—is at home recovering from jaw surgery.

Congrats to **Schildt** family—**Betsy, Devon and little Mark**—their new daughter was born Tuesday, March 24<sup>th</sup> 9:37 am, **Avery Elizabeth** 7 lb 13 oz 19 ½ inches. Mom is home a doing well.

**Jim Kerby** had surgery at the Everett Colby campus for several hernias last Thursday and **Lela** has been battling the flu. Keep them both in your prayers.

Keep **Lois Caldwell** in your prayers for an upcoming surgery.

**Lynne Harpell** had out-patient foot surgery on Tuesday. She is off from teaching school for the week, but will be back next week.

March has been very busy for me and very, very busy on Friday Nights. We have been having 130 guests for most of the month and hit 160 last night!

There is a tremendous need for food, comfort, encouragement and personal validation for many people in our community and they are flocking in on Friday Night to find that. Each night we ask our guests to sign in and as I look and pray over last nights paper I see names that range from **Gator to Happiness to Cowboy to Boomer to Moon**. Though some of the names are unconventional and are often their "street names", they are all hurting people with lives full of stories that are just as valid as

yours and mine. Please consider giving of your time to come down and listen to people and become a person of encouragement. It will change your life and theirs!!

Prayer requests for the last couple of weeks are as follows: Anon - for **M** - for her asthma. **AD** - for the strength to move along the straight and narrow path to eternal life. Bless his loving soul, thank you Lord. Anon - for **RF** going through a lot of medical problems, **P&C** - for **JN** and his recent surgeries, **FW** - my dad dying of cancer, **G** - for success in business, skill and for abundance in work as a result of my hard work. That my kids are okay. **RH** - my friend has cancer. Please pray for **C**. She loves the Lord. **F** - for **S & M G**. That

they quit lying, cheating and stealing. And treat people right.

**RS** - for my mom's kidneys. My wife having a baby. For all the people we know & the unknown for their salvation. **OG** - for my mother **S** due to a respiratory infection and cancer.

**G** - for healing for a co-worker, **P** who had gall bladder surgery this past week, **RI** - for a place to live and serve Christ. Have attended Bible Study Fellowship at FBC years ago. Please help if you can. God Bless. Jesus is my life and it's hard being alone. Thank you

## Friday Nite Update

# Life group contributing opportunities

## Happy Birthday

April 1st, Jan Dexter, John McKissick, Leona Holttum

April 2nd, Sara Naylor

April 3rd, Pat Alvarez

April 4th, Howard Crowley

April 5th, Gerald Allen, Maria Menia,

April 6th, Robin Baird, Debbie Benedetto, Oma Kiniry,

Jim Naylor, Kovith Sysengrath,

Evelyn Thompson, Hans Wold

## Celebrate Holy Week "Walking In The Footsteps of Jesus"

- Maundy Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 pm  
"Christ in the Passover"
- Good Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 pm  
"Passion of the Christ"
- Easter Worship Celebration,  
Sunday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 and 11:00 am

**We're on the web! CareNecton, Hub & Bulletin—check it out!**

**See how we look in color—[www.fbc-everett.org](http://www.fbc-everett.org)**

The nursery department needs 6 smocks sewn, if you could help, please contact Christen Weller  
We have lots of babies and we need to keep the teachers clean! Call 425-259-9166 if you could help.

**Pray for 98208!** God is bringing to FBC many new faces who happen to live in the 98208, Silver Lake area of Everett. Praise the Lord! Join us in praying for God to raise up someone who would host a life group in south Everett. Also pray that God would raise up someone to be the facilitating leader of the group. Our elders and staff are ready with resources and coaching, but we're asking that you join with us in praying that God would go before us and provide for us. For more information contact either Allan Love at [allan@fbc-everett.net](mailto:allan@fbc-everett.net) or Bryan Blair at [b\\_blair@mac.com](mailto:b_blair@mac.com)

"Time is limited to reserve your tickets for the Women of Faith Conference in Seattle on July 24th and 25th. We have tickets available, but we need to have them confirmed by April 15th. Please see Ruelyn Nelson or Eva LaStrange at the info table in the Hospitality Room before or after our church service. If you would like to get more info or confirm your ticket please contact Ruelyn ."

On Easter Sunday April 12<sup>th</sup> during both services we will be celebrating individuals' commitment to Christ through the waters of baptism. If you have personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, but have not publicly announced and celebrated that decision through baptism, please prayerfully consider taking this next step on Easter Sunday. If you would like more information about baptism, or would like to schedule your baptism for Easter Sunday, contact Pastor Allan: [allan@fbc-everett.net](mailto:allan@fbc-everett.net) or call the church office at 425.259.9166.

### Update

March 29th , 2009

Adult attendance: 264

Children: 9 am||37

10:30 am||37

Youth Small Group:||NA

Leaders:||NA

### USHER CAPTAIN 2009:

March—Marc Owenby

Darrell Olson

April—Luckey Elkins

Pete Sontra

### COFFEE HOUR 2009

April 5th

Betty Reeves

ESL Class

April 12th

Florence Miller

Women of Purpose