

Life Group Leader's Guide

For the week of Oct. 15, 2017

Leaders:

On Sunday, Pastor Mark began a three-week series on relationships. As homework writers, we discussed many directions. We can't put everything in the homework, so here are a few additional ideas that you can choose from, if you wish.

1. Consider (if you have access) bringing a pile of Legos of different sizes. Ask each group member to choose the Lego that has the number of connectors that they feel illustrates the number of close relationships that person can successfully maintain. This is based on Larry Osborne's idea, stated here:

I think of people as being like Lego blocks. We all have a limited number of connectors. Introverts have a few. Some extroverts have dozens. But either way, once they're full, they're full. And when that happens, we tend to be friendly but to not connect. It's what happens when you move to a new town and are excited by everyone's friendliness, only to be discouraged three months later that you haven't connected with anyone. The reality is, it's not so much a church full of cliques as it is a church full of people whose connectors are already full.

Encourage your Life Group members to remember that no one has the "right number" of close relationships for everyone. It may help them to understand that they are wired to only be able to keep so many relational "plates in the air," and for them to add a friendship, another may need to disconnect, somewhat.

2. Do any in your group enjoy memorizing Scripture or being challenged to meditate on specific passages? If so, encourage your group to concentrate on Ephesians 4:29 – 5:2 over the next few weeks.
3. How can you impact the coming together of your Life Group through true friendships, rather than out of an obligation because your church says it's important? Make this an area of prayer for you, and if appropriate, extend this prayer request to your group.

Quick Review:

Based on what Mark talked about this week, as Christians, what limitations do we face in our relationships? (This could include the opposites of Mark's five sermon points.) (Receive from Jesus; you have to go first; forgive and apologize; intentionally invest in the relationship; speak life into your relationships.)

My Story:

1. What three words would your close friends use to describe you?
2. How many people do you feel like you really connected with this week?
3. How easy is it for you to apologize?
4. Think through your friendships. Can you categorize your friendships as:
 - a. Entertainment-driven?
 - b. Activity-driven?
 - c. Crisis-driven?
 - d. Relationship-driven?
 - e. Into which category do most of your relationships fall? Is this satisfying to you?

Digging Deeper:

1. Skim 1 Kings 18: 16-45 and 1 Kings 19:1-9 and give a short re-cap of the situation. (Elijah had two primary adversaries, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. Elijah trusted God and walked in faith in dire circumstances. After the huge victory of the sacrifices, Elijah fell into a depression. He felt utterly alone.)
2. Now read 1 Kings 19:14-21.
 - How was Elijah feeling in v. 14, and are his feelings valid?
 - Using verse 19-20 as evidence, what can you imagine about Elisha's character?
 - Why did God choose this moment to bring Elisha into Elijah's life?
 - Can you think of any relationships that came into your life "at a specific moment"? Are there any relationships that you feel were especially orchestrated by God?
 - Is there any significance in Elisha burning the plowing equipment? (Elisha was showing his "all in" attitude toward Elijah. He didn't plan to return to his former way of life.)
 - In 2 Kings 2, we see the end of Elijah's earthly mission. Elijah and his followers all knew that Elijah's time was up. Read 2 Kings 2:1-11. The 50 men chose to watch from a distance while Elisha went on with Elijah. What does this say about Elisha's feelings for Elijah?
 - Using the context clues of the reign of the kings, we can assume that Elisha spent 6-8 years as the companion and protégé of Elijah. What can you imagine happening in this friendship to get Elisha to have this type of attitude towards Elijah's departure and to ask Elijah what he asked?
 - How are mentorship and friendship linked?
3. Read each of the following verses: Prov. 27:17; 1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24-25.
 - Describe the characteristics of friendship found in each of these verses.
 - If you had to choose only one of these verses to describe what you look for in friendship, which verse would it be?

Taking it Home

1. Think through your current friendships. How are you doing in being the kind of friend you hope to have? Is there something you could do this week that would demonstrate that kind of friendship?
2. Read Matt. 5:23-24. Mark's point of "always go first" is illustrated in these verses. Who do you need to go first with? Can your Life Group pray or support you in any way?