

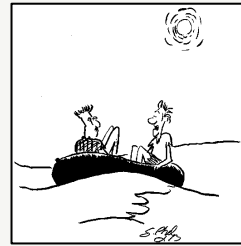


Small Group Newsletter

Introduction

Small Groups are well underway for the year and it's time to think about how to develop our skills in leadership and get access to good resources for the invigoration of our groups. In this newsletter you'll find details of the next training days for leaders and hosts of small groups and other resources that might enhance your ministry.

Steven Webster

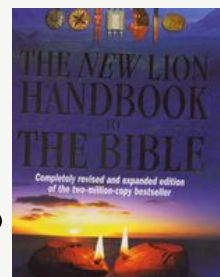


It must be Wednesday.
I'm feeling guilty 'cause
I'm going to miss home
group again!

Leading Bible Studies can be tricky

"I always feel like I should know the answers to questions people raise about the Bible." If I could have a dollar for every time a new leader of a small group has said this in a training session, I'd be a rich man! Everyone feels underdone when it comes to being well versed on the vast number of topics and the sheer volume of information the Bible has within it, let alone having an adequate opinion on hot topics. However, the task of the small group bible study leader need not be so much about information and knowledge as it is about facilitation and example. We're very fortunate to have every sort of resource and study aid almost at our fingertips via church libraries, bookshops and, of course, via the internet. If, during a study at your home group, someone asks a question about a tricky verse or complex theological matter or a sensitive ethical matter and you and the members of your group cannot adequately respond to, why not put a research party to work? Typically, I would respond to a curly (but sincere) question by saying, "As bible study leader, I don't pretend to know all the answers to our questions, however I do know where we can find some answers." I would then suggest that one or two people be set a task before next week's meeting to bring back to the group some biblical research on the question raised in the group. As leader, I too would go away and do my own discovery on the matter too. Next week, I would set aside a specified time in the evening to hear back from the research party what they have learned and encourage some discussion. This method takes seriously the person's question and encourages open inquiry in the life of your group. It also alleviates the pressure on the study leader to know all things at any given time, and it gives a good example of how we can learn from each other. Some resources worth recommending to your research party are books such as: the *Lion Handbook of the Bible* and *Handbook of Christian Belief*; illustrated Bible dictionaries; *Bible Speaks Today* commentaries and Christian magazines and journals. Many of these are available from our church library. In addition, websites such as: www.textweek.com, www.biblegateway.com, www.christianitytoday.com/biblestudies/, www.zadok.org.au, can be helpful. In addition, your research team can opt to call or visit one of the theologically qualified people in our congregation or a member of the congregation who specializes in the matters in question.

Steve Webster.



"When churches get larger, they must also get smaller"

NEW SMALL GROUP TRAINING DAYS FOR 2009

BETTER BIBLE STUDIES IN GROUPS

Saturday 20 June 2pm—5pm
led by Greg Davies & Steve Webster
at
the home of Shelley Jackson
30 Taplin St North Fitzroy
RSVP via rhloader@bigpond.net.au

CREATIVE WAYS TO PRAY IN GROUPS

Saturday 18 July 2pm—5pm
led by Greg Davies & Steve Webster
at
the home of Su-Hsien Kuan
2/62 May St North Fitzroy
RSVP via rhloader@bigpond.net.au

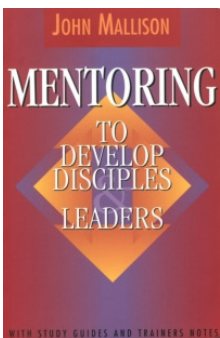
Small Group training days are open to anyone and are especially provided for those currently leading or hosting a home group and anyone interested in leading a group in the future.

Seven Leadership Sins

1. Leadership is largely about our ability to communicate. Many leaders forget that everything about them is communicating either positively or negatively.
2. Many men and women in leadership roles are unsure about themselves - unsure where they are going and unsure of how to get there. Helping a group make a plan for the months ahead (what to study, missions to support, etc) enables a group to function well.
3. Leaders are supposed to value working together. However, we often say to ourselves "It will be quicker and better just to do it myself." Involving someone else in a task takes more work, but contributes to the growth of others.
4. Misguided leaders blame their people's weaknesses for all their problems and in-so-doing find that their group is unhappy with the leader.
5. When we lead, we will be expected to "walk the talk." Our mistake would be to aim for perfection, rather than honesty and humility. The Gospel calls us not to our own righteousness, but reliance on that which Christ freely gives.
6. Leadership sounds like it must be "high level" stuff. However, most of the benefits of good leadership comes from attention to mundane, "low level" work. Many leaders are not good at getting the right things done.
7. Leaders who do not care for themselves physically, emotionally and spiritually are likely to encourage an unhealthy culture among others.



"What do you think Jesus meant here when he said 'Let the little children come to me'?"



A great way to avoid the traps above and to develop a healthy ministry to others is by asking someone to be your mentor; preferably someone a little older and more experienced than you. Mentoring is based on trust and experience and can offer guidance and encouragement to the developing leader. Peer-mentoring involves two people in similar ministry roles at a similar level of experience meeting regularly for mutual encouragement, prayer and sharing of resources. For more detail go to <http://www.johnmallison.com/jmmentorbook.htm> or purchase a copy of John Mallison's book pictured to the left.

Adapted from Seven Deadly Sins of Leadership Today by Dr. Carson Prue © Copyright 2003, Arrow Leadership Ministries.