

# **Apprenticing: Your Primary Ministry**

*This month we are looking at your primary purpose as a small group leader: making disciples... who make disciples! Apprenticing is the largest but most important investment and responsibility you have as a small group leader!*

## **This IS Your Ministry**

- **Apprenticing is the Biblical model for long term ministry.** Look at the Biblical juggernauts and how they grew and sustained their ministries, even after they were gone: Moses and Joshua, Jesus and the disciples, Paul and Timothy, Priscilla, Aquila, to name a few. Each of these had *at least* three years of very individualized discipleship... which is why they succeeded when given the chance!
- **Don't get caught up in "urgent ministry."** It is easy to get caught up in the needs of your members and run out of time for your apprentice. Apprenticing will have an exponentially greater Kingdom because you are reproducing another leader, therefore significantly increasing the amount of people you can reach... but you have to make it a priority. Schedule in time with the very intentional purpose of pouring into your apprentice outside of small group because apprenticing doesn't just happen; you *make* it happen.
- **Get out of the mindset that you are leading a group.** Your number one priority is to raise up other leaders and "equip the saints to do the work of the ministry." You should never be satisfied with simply feeding your small group or get comfortable leading. Use your small group as a training ground for other believers with leadership potential!
  - *What are some ways you can allow others to learn how to lead in and out of small group besides letting them lead the discussion or teaching?*

## **ROI: Return on Investment**

- **The curse of knowledge.** Many small group leaders assume that their apprentice knows how to do certain things: seek the Lord, prepare a small group lesson, follow up with members, etc. because it is second hand for you as a seasoned small group leader. Never take any of this for granted!! Make sure you walk your apprentice step by step through every little detail of how to effectively lead yourself and others.
  - *What are some aspects of small group leading that you could see this being the case with your apprentice?*

- **Let your apprentice in!** The only way your apprentice can know how to do these things is if someone shows them! Their greatest lessons will be learned by watching you, their mentor, do them and by allowing them to follow your lead. Take them everywhere with you. Let them hear you intercede for your small group, invite them to prepare for small group discussions with you, let them be a part of conversations you have while counseling other small group members, etc. You need to make sure they see *every* aspects of leading a small group multiple times over. The more you invest in them, the greater Kingdom return on investment you will see!
  - *In what ways have you done this with your apprentice already?*
  - *Where do you still need to let them in?*
- **Now let your apprentice out!** It is one thing to know it. It is another to see it. But it is an entirely different beast actually *doing it*. Make sure that you don't just teach and show your apprentice the vital aspects of being a disciple and a small group leader. Let them take the wheel! You don't want their test drive to be the first small group they lead on their own. That is setting them up for failure. Let them lead your small group many times before you send them out. A healthy small group rarely has the leader leading!

## **So When the Grouplinks Come...**

- **You are ready for rapid growth.** At First Assembly, the Fall brings with it a massive explosion of growth and people not plugged into small groups. Especially with the success of our summer Grouplink, we need to be ready for this! You may have 10 new people join your small group in a matter of one to three weeks! Having an apprentice means that you have someone who can co-lead your small group is there is a large influx of people so the burden is not all on your shoulders.
  - *How can having an apprentice equipped and trained even before you multiply be beneficial to you as a small group leader?*
- **You can skip the growing pains and move right into multiplication!** Having a house uncomfortably crammed with people will cause some to not come back. Having an apprentice ready if you are at max capacity is critical. With an apprentice ready in the wing, you can effectively multiply your small group in a variety of ways without having to endure weeks of uncomfortable cramming. You are not only alleviating space, but empowering your apprentice as an official leader and creating more space for more disciples.
  - *What are some different ways multiplication can take place?*