

## Leader's Retreat

### **Suicide intervention programs:**

-Use the principle of ambivalence to help people live.

-Ambivalence is the state of having mixed feelings or contradictory ideas about something or someone.

-We would often think of that as a "bad" thing...and it could be.

-If I am ambivalent about things I should be decided and proactive on...its not good.

-My marriage, my walk with Christ, whether I die or not.

-However, the fact that a person is ambivalent means they are not decided and that can be used in their favor.

-A person who is talking to you about being suicidal is currently ambivalent about life and death...otherwise they would not be talking they would dead or moving that way.

-So counselors are trained to work that ambivalence to move them towards the "life" side rather than the "death" side of the equation.

All people live at different times in different ways with a sense of ambivalence...there are many causes of this...but the fact that we are not all growing in a straight upward slope to be like Jesus demonstrates this.

But we tend to see people as "wanting to change" or "not wanting to change"...but is it that simple?

Is it that simple for us personally? It's not for me.

From now through 2018 we want to focus on "closing the gap"...between where we are where we want to be (or should want to be)

This weekend...the role of leaders (you and me) in helping people move towards the change side of their ambivalence.

God uses leaders to help people change...and to help people want to change.

**Its not your responsibility to change anyone...**it is your privilege to lead God's people towards God's purposes in their lives...to influence them towards the good God has for them.

**1 Peter 4:10 Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. 11 If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen**

Various forms: manifold...diamond.

Manifestations of grace in two big categories:

-Speaking

-Serving

\*Word and actions

Purpose: God may be praised through Jesus Christ.

**Your leadership for God's people is a grace gift to you, for them.**

You may not feel like leadership is your gift, but at the least it is your calling and it is your opportunity...and God will give you what you need to serve his people through leadership.

**Wisconsin:**

-I struggled Sunday night

-This verse helped me

-It helped me to consider the needs of the chaplains (some of who may very well be deployed to Texas in the coming months).

-It helped me think less of me and more of my calling to use my gift/ responsibility to serve others and in so doing reveal God's grace to others.

Leaders lead primarily through "words"...leading meetings, giving encouragement, giving input.

**And**

Through service...putting others first, logistics, investing in others, praying for others, setting example

Word and Service sums up everything you do for the good of others as a leader.

You may or not be appreciated or recognized for all you do as a leader...but leadership is a profound service to others.

**And leading is an act of courage...because you are putting yourself out there, taking a risk.**

People who have not lead...tend to not understand this.

Followers can sometimes grip...forgetting that you are putting yourself on the line by leading them.

When you sit down at group...and your members look at you...they wait for you to direct the meeting...they are saying "lead me"

And many times we are thinking "Who me?" Or "uh, oh"

But leading, even with its challenges...when done for the good of others, for the glory of God...is its own reward...or can be.

**Leading others for their good doesn't mean your job is to give people what they want or demand.**

**In the gospel of John, does anyone know the first recorded words of Jesus?**

Back story...John begins with the cosmic eternal Word becoming flesh.

Then it goes to John the Baptist and his confession of Jesus being the Lamb of God as he passed by.

**John 1:37 When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. 38 Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"**

His first words were a question..."What do you want?"

Do you think they even knew at that point? They probably had a sense of longing, desire for purpose...but I doubt his question made sense at that point.

I think he was pressing on their ambivalence...what do you want out of life? Do you know? Do you want what you should want?

The question is still pertinent...its what we need to ask ourselves and our group members.

**"What do you want?"**

The answer you get may may not be what they "should want" or really need.

"I want this group to fix me"

"I want in depth Bible Study" (All Bible study that is applied to life is in depth, if not...its shallow).

**What should we want to want?**

**Phil 3:10 I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.**

We should want to grow...to know Christ, to make Christ known.

**To close the gap between where I am and where I can be....Grow in faith and love expressed in thoughts and actions.**

**\*General areas (with tons of specific applications)**

## **-Trust God/Love People**

How do we help people want to want this...and help them do something about that desire?

What role does a leader have in the lives of others?

**Your calling, your role as a leader is faithfulness...nothing more, nothing less.**

The people who are a part of your ministry must take responsibility for their own spiritual growth...you can provide the platform, the opportunity, the leadership, the example.

If a person wants to grow...they will...whatever does or doesn't happen in your group.

If a person doesn't want to grow...they won't...whatever does or doesn't happen in your group.

**Fix this fact in your mind.**

I am not saying it doesn't matter what you do as a leader...it does.

You can whet the appetite of those who are lacking in desire and you can help accelerate the progress of the one who has desire. **(this is what we will train on tomorrow)**

My point is that you **not** take more responsibility on yourself than is warranted.

A person who is looking to outside factors as the key to their own growth (my leader, the kind of study we do, member care, childcare, snacks, etc) is not going to grow...even if Jesus was their leader and Paul his LIT.

Even if Jesus was multiplying fish and bread and turning water into wine every Wednesday night as a part of group.

**I say this with all seriousness.**

Do excellent, faithful work...but do not take the responsibility that is not yours.

You are responsible to be faithful with who you are, with the time and talents you have...that's it.

**Ask you group..."What do you want?"**

If the expectation does not match reality...tell them what they can actually expect.

I'll tell you what you can tell them in a minute...but in essence...they can expect to grow, to close the gap between where they are now and the full image of Christ.

They can expect this if they believe it is possible, and are willing to exert the effort to see it happen.

**The effort includes showing up, and throwing in.**

**What about you...What do you want? Why are you doing this?**

I believe first it is because you believe God has called you...and you want to be found faithful. (maybe your sense of call is a work in progress...that's ok)

I believe God has put a desire to lead in your heart...and this is a good thing, a good desire.

I believe you either already know, or soon will...that you will benefit more than anyone else.

Leaders (who are faithful) grow in their love and faith and skills.

Okay...so what can people in your group expect...what should you tell them?

**Who has eaten at a Waffle house?**

How many Waffle houses are there? (2100)

Which state has the most? (Georgia, 381)

How many states don't have any? (25)

**In Houston most restaurants were closed...but out of 30 Waffle Houses...28 never closed their doors.**

Waffle Houses are known for never closing their doors...open all the time.

They have special teams that plan for storms, every restaurant has a "Waffle house storm playbook" with protocols for how to keep operating if the electricity and running water go out.

This may sound silly...but they are recognized as one of the top four organizations that FEMA can depend on to serve the public in disasters: Home Depot, Lowes, Wal-Mart, and Waffle House.

FEMA even measures the severity of a storm's damage by what they call the "Waffle House Index"

A FEMA official said "When a Waffle House shuts down, its really bad."

So in the worst disaster, possibly, in US history...two of 30 Waffles houses had to shut down...impressive.

The key to helping Waffle House stay on track during a Crisis...a Waffle House exec said "We keep it simple, sometimes we can only cook bacon and eggs...but sometimes you need bacon and eggs."

So, let me give you our "bacon, eggs, and toast"

**Core components of Group life**

**Are also**

**Core competencies of a Group leader**

**Member Care**

**Meetings**

**Mission**

I do not want to sacrifice clarity for creativity...there are fancier ways of describing these three things...but not clearer ways.

It can feel like leading is complicated...and certainly the life situations of people can become that.

But these are the three things we want to try and do as well as possible.

If someone says "why don't we do this or that?"

You can say (if its true) "Those are good things, but these are the three things God has called us to do and we want to do them as well as possible."

If those three things happen...other things that are important will happen as well...we will give group members their best shots at closing the gaps between where they are and where God wants them to be.

**M&M: we are not trying to be "cute" but memorable.**

-Plus M&M are delicious

**Meetings: (see if you can find a "meeting" mm) (symbols)**

-This doesn't sound glamorous or even spiritual...meetings

We don't even like meetings...do we?

I do?

I like meetings that I like.

I sometimes "meet" my three daughters for coffee over the holidays when they are all in town...I love that meeting.

There are other meetings I have to attend that are necessary but I don't love them.

**A meeting is the action of coming together.**

How can anything happen between people, if they don't come together.

In our meetings...reflected in the arrows going up and coming down...we want to encounter God together in Word, in Prayer.

That's it. But that's profound.

Encounter God, together, word, and prayer...what about talking, eating, laughing...yep that's the together part.

\*We sometimes call it "coffee and content"

-Turn the dials so it doesn't get too imbalanced one way or the other.

These kinds of meetings shape our very lives...they impact our "wanters"

As we encounter God in Word, Prayer, and through each other...we are learning to "Want what we should want."

So that if Jesus were ask us "What do you want?"

We would answer "To be with you and to be like you, more and more."

Its not complicated...it is transformational.

We are not looking for a buzz, a homerun, a good feeling...we are looking to incrementally, closing the gap...by coming together...coffee and content.

### **Member care: (Search for a Member Care MM)**

Taking care of each other in ways that transcend the meetings.

Represented by the circular arrows.

Could be mentoring and discipleship.

Could be friendship...enjoying life together

Could be walking through joyful challenges (new houses, new babies, etc)

Could be walking through painful challenges (disease, disaster, death, etc)

There is no program for this, and different personalities will do this differently.

Member care at the group level is within the scope of mostly normal life events.

### **Disaster strikes a community it goes like this:**

-City, County, State, Federal, Military (DSCA)

-It is always handled at the lowest possible level

-However it not always possible to handle at the lowest level.

**How do I know?** Ask.

Don't feel bad about asking...in our church, you are my/our priority (staff priority).

Why...you are taking care of people, you are on the front lines pastoring others.

Taking care of you is taking care of the church.

**\*Talking to Ch Butler:** "I don't work for you, but my job is to make you successful"

**Mission: (Mission MM)**

This is represented by the arrows moving out horizontally.

This includes evangelism...primarily

But also involvement in the community in ways that indirectly take the gospel to people.

The mission of the church is the Great Commission.

We do good work in the community, and serving people in itself is God honoring.

But we cannot lose sight of the fact that the gospel is the core of our mission.

So if your group has no "mission" project or "service" project...that's not really the issue.

But if your group is engaged with unchurched people connected to people in your group...that is mission.

It can more organic than organized...but it is must intentional.

Part of having a missional vision is to be open to people coming into you group who don't "fit".

It also means you need to live with a multiplication mentality...you can hold on to your friends and you should...but you must not hold on to your group being just as you want it to be.

Sometimes you will not be in group with your best friends...they will be leading or serving elsewhere...sometimes you will see God multiply your group and your reward will be...to see friends go to other group.

There is pain and joy in multiplication.

If you group does not multiply...if it does not add anyone new...fruitfulness is God's domain, faithfulness is yours.

Concern yourself with faithfulness and leave the rest to God.

### **Which brings us back to the center: To Leadership and to Waffles**

Waffle houses are there for communities (in Houston, at times the only place people could go to) because of leadership with a clear vision.

Waffle houses don't look like much...and to be honest, not being a big breakfast fan I didn't give them much respect until I read about how they care for people in disasters.

How their simple plan combined with intentional leadership equips them to be there for people in sunshine and rain...well, I'm a fan.

Not going to eat there much, if at all but I'm more likely to...they have my respect.

**They are successful in blue sky and black sky days because of leadership...and a simple plan.**

### **Center: Leader (leader MM)**

-The reason leadership sometimes has a bad reputation is because sometimes leaders are self-serving.

-But wherever good things are happening...good leadership is there.

This is without dispute.

But God uses leaders to accomplish his purposes...Abraham, Moses, David, Prophets, Judges, then Pastors, elders, teachers, government authorities, parents.

God uses you.

Lead: Meetings, Member Care, Mission.

You don't have to do it all...just see to it that it is happening at the level and in the way that fits you.

At the core of the circles is "leader" and as you lead your group your most important task is to seek to reproduce your leadership in another person.

### **Multiply your life in another person:**

-LIT

-LIT-emerging LIT or potential LIT

The world is desperate for leadership with Character, competency, commitment.

Invest...don't try to make them in your image...but encourage and challenge and help them close the gap in their life.

Be faithful...God will do the rest.

**Tomorrow you will get some excellent tools to help you in this: tools that apply to group life, family life, and work life.**

**Maybe you are wondering: Who am I that I would think I could or should reproduce myself?**

I understand the question and the struggle...but lets finish where we started.

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The question "Who am I?" is the wrong question...it is not about me at all.

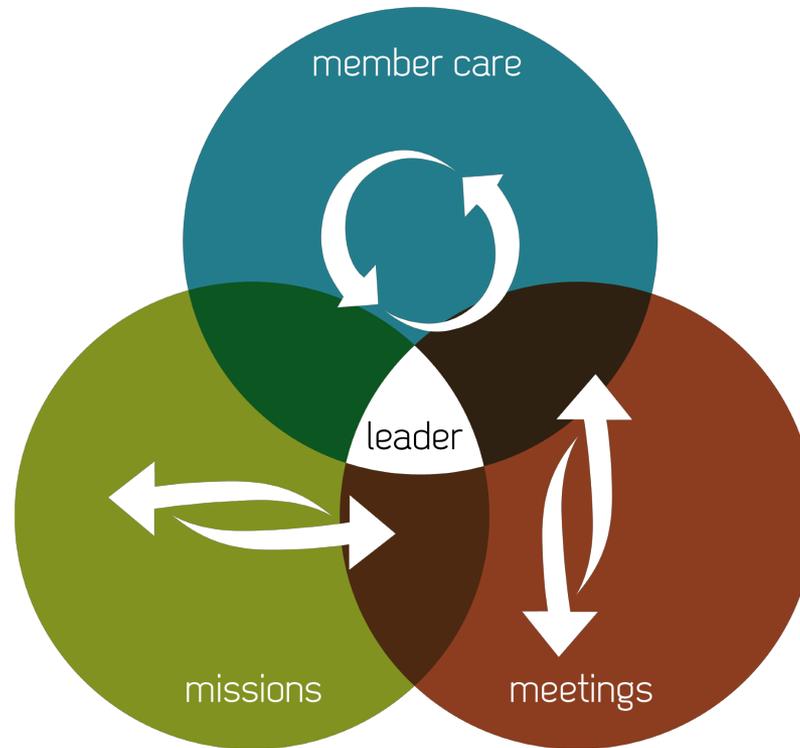
I have been gifted and called by God to administer his grace...so that God will be praised.

What a great God to use someone like me...I must look to him for strength and be found faithful at my post.

I must consider his glory and the good of others...not my own sense of worth or inadequacy.

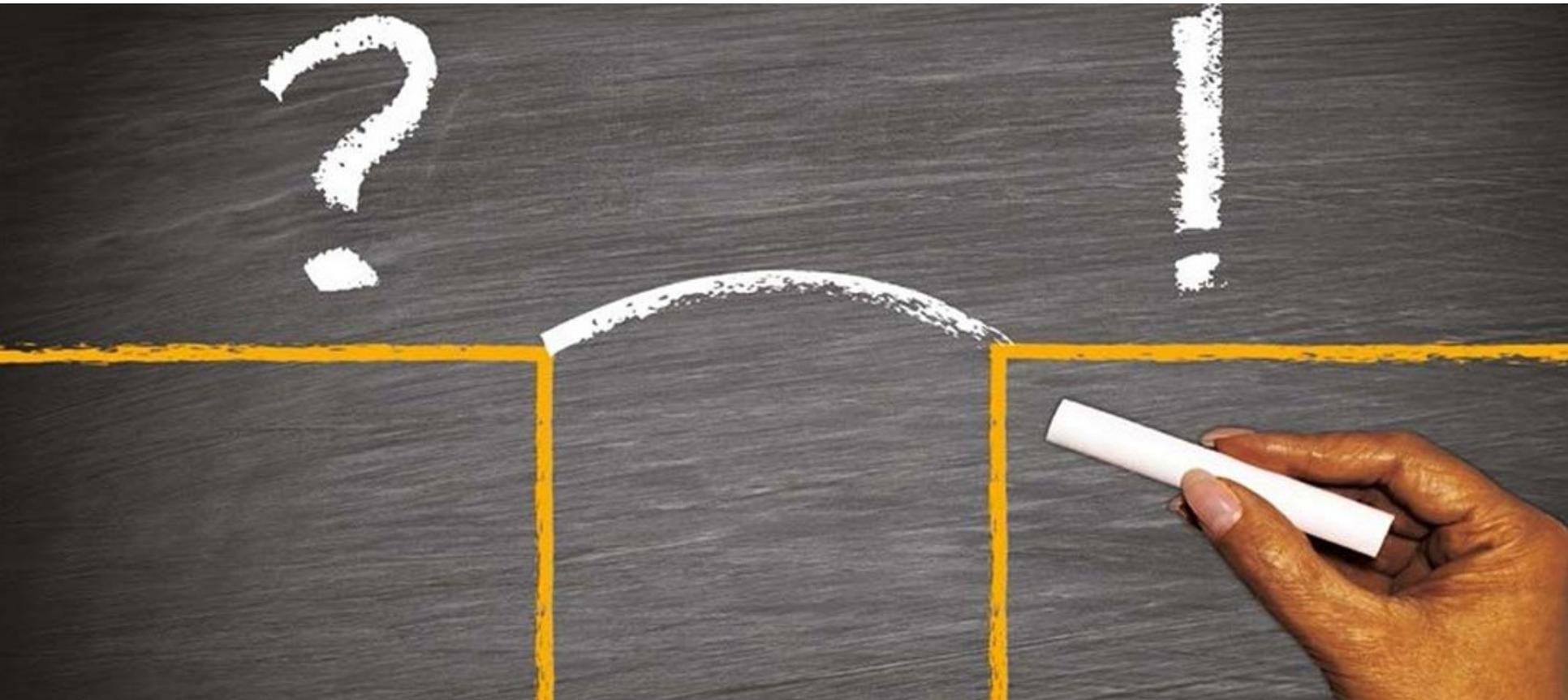
**Lead...it is your responsibility it is your opportunity.**

# *Leadership Community*



# ***Closing the Gap***

## ***"Trust God/Love People"***



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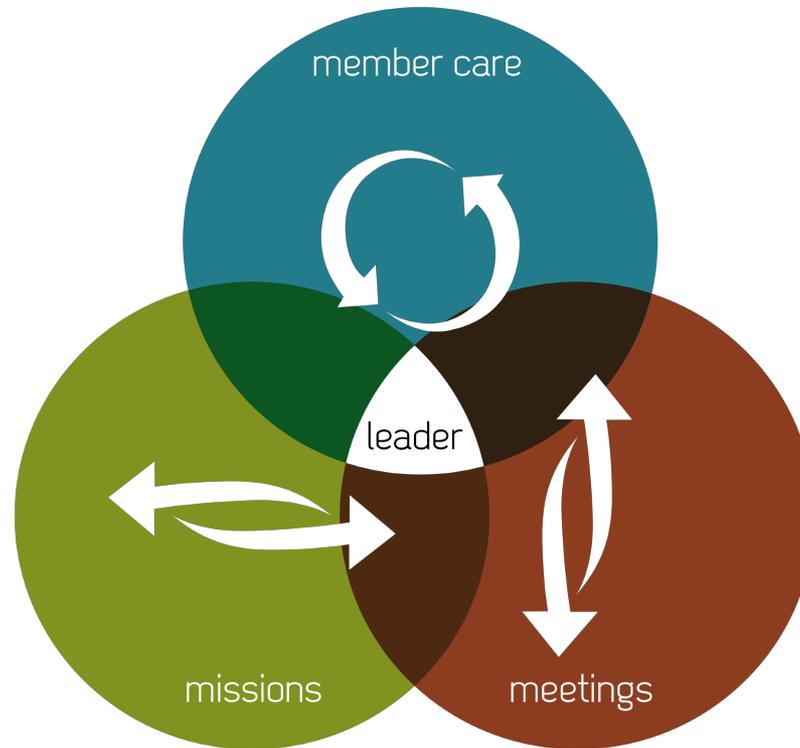
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# ***Leadership Community***



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