

Life Groups Leadership Training

05 Building Deeper Relationships

Welcome to building deeper relationships. You see true community is not easy to build. It is not for the faint of heart. In our culture, it seems like many adults don't have very many close friends. Even those of us who have been attending church for a long time, we could be lonely.

This is one reason why this session is so important. Everyone needs community. So in this session, let's take a look at **three principles for building deeper relationships.**

The first one is that you go first by modeling and encourage authenticity. You see when questioned about his authority to teach, Jesus pointed to the truthfulness and the authenticity of his life. In John 7:18 He says this, he who seeks the glory of God and he's talking about himself, he who seeks the glory of God is a man of truth, there is nothing false about him.

So to get the context, I encourage you to read the whole passage on your own but in short, they challenged his credentials. And in fact what he was saying is, I'm credible, because I'm truthful.

So let me ask you a question. Why does it matter that there was nothing false about Jesus? Why is integrity so important? You see relationships are built on trust and of course you already know this, you know you trust a bank with your money, because they have a vault, they have security. You trust a doctor with your health, because they have education and experience. And you trust a person with your life, because they're authentic.

In fact, Jesus was saying you can trust me, because my teaching is from God the Father and my life is authentic. And we are called to follow his example. It is not easy to take a risk to be vulnerable with your personal thoughts and feelings with your group. It will help you be real and build trust.

One way we can be authentic is to admit our confusion or ignorance, so you don't have to pretend you know everything. It's okay to say I'm not sure on that one. You see another way you can be authentic is to be open about your personal brokenness. Now you don't need to go and list all of your sins in great detail but pretending that you're perfect won't build deeper relationships in your group.

The second idea for building deeper relationships is this hold one another accountable. You see, everyone has something stressing them and everyone struggles to navigate life. We all need support.

The truth is that we're better together. And Ecclesiastes four says this. Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up, but pity anyone who falls and has no one to help him up.

You see when we are connected to others, our lives are more effective. And we have helped when we fall in our spiritual life. Accountability gives another person permission to check up on you in the commitments that you've made to God. You see accountability breaks down a couple different ways that I've seen through the years and I want to go through those.

One way it breaks down is when **we don't want it ourselves.** And so if I don't want accountability, then I'm not going to hold other people accountable.

A second way it breaks down is, is when **we place burdens on people.** When we tell other people where they need to be held accountable and, you know, things like you need to stop being lazy, or you need to read your Bible more.

Another way that accountability breaks down is that **when others fail we could be too judgmental** and we're too condemning. And the truth is, people already feel guilty, they don't need us to heap on more guilt.

You see it's the job of the Holy Spirit to convict and last time I checked, I wasn't a member of the Trinity and you weren't either. And maybe you're just kind of thinking you know why just tell it as it is. Well what if he did something different. What if he told it like it could be. You see accountability happens when you want it for yourself. And when you let others choose it. And when you show grace when they fail.

Here's the third idea for building deeper relationships, and **it's to avoid the quick fix.**

Have you noticed that life isn't very easy. I mean I'm only 65 years old. I've been following Jesus for more than 40 years and sometimes I wonder, is it ever going to get any easier. Truth is, on this side of eternity, God allows confusion, and pain and suffering. There are different seasons in our lives. Paul talked about his own suffering in second Corinthians chapter four, he said this, "We were hard pressed on every side, but not crushed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted but not abandoned, struck down, but not destroyed. And through all this pain was God faithful. Absolutely.

But in all this pain what did Paul wanted to happen. I doubted we see when we're in seasons like this. The natural response is to get out as soon as possible. Of course that's not wrong, but we need to do something more. We need to avoid the quick fix and we also need to ask God, what are you trying to teach me through this.

And listening to that answer can take a long time. You see, we live in an instant everything society. Regular mail isn't quick enough and so we have electronic mail. And an email isn't quick enough, so we have instant messages. And even our food has to be fast and if it takes too long to drive there, you could have it delivered. Instant gratification isn't new to human nature.

This is why the Bible tells us to be patient and develop perseverance and to wait on the Lord. Unfortunately, when it comes to matters of the soul, the pace is often slow. We need to swim against the currents of our culture and wait patiently for God to speak. The quick fix is so tempting, but it also misses out on what God is doing in our hearts.

So when someone in your group is hurting, be supportive, but don't be so quick to jump in and fix it.

As we wrap up, we've seen that we can build deep relationships in three different ways. The first is by modeling and encouraging authenticity. Number two, by holding one another accountable. And finally number three by avoiding the quick fix.

Now you don't want to miss our final session because in this we're going to talk about perseverance and how do we grow as a leader.