# Session 2 Defining a Growth Group Leader (Care giving)

# What Is the Role of a Growth Group Leader?

A growth group leader is a person who takes the lead **in creating an environment where biblical community can grow**. Notice that the **group leader is not responsible for *making*** biblical community grow. That’s God’s job (1 Corinthians 3:6–7). Warren Wave Story The leader simply creates conditions that are necessary and favorable for the life-giving dynamic of an Acts-2 community to flourish within your own church. Lives will be transformed and people will come to Christ when this happens (Acts 2:47).

* What does it take to become one? In order to lead others in growth, we must first make sure that our leaders are growing. At church, we can measure ourselves by using the following definition of a disciple:

1. One who is \_\_\_\_Saved\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 2:8)
2. Living the Spirit Filled Life (Eph. 2:22)
3. Actively doing the works of \_\_\_Ministry\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Eph. 4:12,16)
4. In the local church (Time & Resources)(Eph.1:1)

The most important requirement for a potential growth group leader is that they hold in their heart the Greatest Commandment: Love for God and others (Mark 12:30–31). The only way group leaders can be effective in all of their responsibilities is by genuinely loving the people in their group.

* What do they do? Practically speaking, the role involves the…

1. initial \_\_organization\_\_\_\_ of logistics for gatherings,
2. the communication and advocacy of the group’s \_\_Purpose\_\_, (stay one course; Why are we here)
3. facilitating spiritual conversations and Bible studies,
4. and introducing opportunities for participants to take their \_\_Next\_\_\_ \_\_Steps\_\_\_ in growing closer to Jesus Christ.

Inside an actual group meeting, leaders should view themselves **as facilitators—not professors** or curriculum experts. Good leaders will take initiative with different parts of the learning experience, but mostly their job is to encourage the group as a whole to carry the responsibilities of teaching, prayer, and worship.

* What are the responsibilities?

Pray

Connect with Coaches

Continue to Grow

In addition to praying for your group members and serving them in love, group leaders are responsible to stay connected with other leaders in the church. In fact, the most important connection group leaders have in the larger growth group ministry of your church is with the leadership branch that provides personal prayer and care for those leaders. Most churches refer to people who serve in this branch of leadership as coaches. Therefore, it is vital for the health of group leaders, individual groups, and the larger small-group ministry that individual small-group leaders connect with their coaches at least once a month.   
  
In addition, many churches have discovered the power of clustering similar groups together with the same coach—thereby creating affinity-based growth group leadership teams. Many group leaders have found meeting with others on the same team to be enriching and inspirational since they are usually dealing with similar issues.   
  
It’s also important for group leaders to read leadership resources (as given) and other communication pieces. These are often written or assigned by coaches or the pastoral team. This does take a little time, but it enhances the way you lead and the way your church’s growth groups ministry lives out its purposes and fulfills its mission. It also promotes personal skill-development and a healthy, balanced growth groups ministry.  
  
Last but not least, pray for your group, your church and other growth group leaders in relationship with you. Prayer is foundational to the life and healthy growth of the ministry. It’s extremely encouraging to know that you will always be upheld in prayer by brothers and sisters who can intercede empathetically and strategically for you because of a common role. This way, each group leadership team serves as an intercessory prayer team—ensuring that every leader is covered, protected, strengthened and made effective in doing what Christ has called them to do.

* **Motives for Leadership**

**Serve Christ!** Colossians 3: 23-24 *Whatever you do, work at it will all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**Bear fruit in your life!** John 15: 8 *this is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

**Keep watch over (shepherd others)!** Acts 20: 28 *Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.*

**Be an example to the body!** I Peter 5: 2-4 *Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.*

**Use your gifts to serve others!** Ephesians 4: 12-13 *…to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

**Communicate the message of reconciliation!** 2 Corinthians 5: 19-21 *that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, no counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

* **Wrong Motives**

**Self-exaltation!** Proverbs 27: 2 *Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips.*

**To feel important or gain prestige!** 1 Thessalonians 2: 4-6 *We speak as men approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not trying to please men but God, who tests our hearts. You we know never used flattery, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed-God is our witness. We were not looking for praise from men, not from you or anyone else.*

**Because someone pressured you.** 1 Peter 5: 2 *Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers-not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be*

* **Hindrances to Leaders**

**Having a short fuse!** James 1: 19-20 *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

**Un-confessed Sin!** I John 1: 9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

**False Teaching!** 2 Timothy 4: 3-4 *for the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.*

Leaders are called and gifted of God to build others, facilitate their growth, and lead by example in obedience and character. The quality of ministry is directly proportional to the quality of leadership.

Don’t worry! **If you hold in your heart a desire to grow in your love for God and people (Mark 12:30–31), you have the stuff that makes for a life-changing growth group leader.**

**Growth Groups Leaders Care**

**All true leadership is built on care. You have heard it said that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.** When people know that you really care they will follow your leadership. In other words, you have to earn the trust of the people you are leading. Shepherding and care is a great way to develop trust.

“Where are the spiritual leaders, the shepherds of the flock, the elders of God’s people? Why are one or two official Christian leaders assigned the job of pastor and expected to carry a burden that belongs to many shoulders? Where are the people who can listen well and guide us through our problems to the Father’s heart and who regard it as their calling to do so? Whatever became of the idea that all believers are priests?” *Larry Crabb, “Connecting”*

**Growth Groups function much like a hospital**. They provide emergency care, rehabilitative care and long-term care.

**\_\_\_Emergency\_\_\_ \_\_Room\_\_\_ Care: Responding to a Crisis**

**Paul lost job;**

Your group cannot predict which crisis will affect its members. Accidents happen, illnesses attack, jobs are lost, friends and family members die and emotional trauma strikes one or more members at any given time. But your group can commit to providing emergency care.

You may be the first person contacted in a crisis situation. Galatians 6: 2 states “Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”Growth groups provide the necessary community so that we can lighten the burden of one another. For its member being connected to a Growth Group family and the body of Christ is a privilege.

**\_\_Rehabilitative\_\_ \_\_\_Care\_\_\_\_: Helping With Recovery**

**Stacy lost baby**

Growth groups are uniquely suited to provide follow up care after a crisis has ended.

Example: Someone loses a loved one. Everybody comes to the funeral and maybe several people check on them for a couple of weeks. This is usually where the care stops. Growth groups can provide consistent care for the entire grief process. By holding one another up in prayer and asking heartfelt questions about how to help during the loss, we can simply be there for one another.

**\_\_\_Long\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_Term\_\_\_ Care: A Lifetime of Support**

No one person has the resources to single-handedly provide long term care to another person. But with the help of Growth Group leaders, Care Coordinators, Teachers and all the members of a group we have the ability and resources to provide long term care.

In the Jerusalem church, a group of Greek-speaking Jewish widows were missing out on the daily food distribution. Truly these women required extra care and support. The twelve formed a ministry team of Greek men “full of the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6: 3) to meet the widow’s short and long term needs. Their support freed the apostles to concentrate on preaching and prayer.