



## Soul Care Presentation

## **Big Rocks of Grace Fellowship Church**

### **Rock #1      We want to be Bible-based in all that we do.**

We want our church to be based on something that doesn't change, something that's eternal. Isaiah 40:8 says, *"The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."* We want our preaching, teaching, counseling, and discipling to stay anchored in God's eternal truth, and not our opinions or preferences.

### **Rock # 2      We want to be grace-based.**

We don't want to ever get over grace. In fact, we believe the Bible teaches it's all grace from start to finish. We need SAVING GRACE to JUSTIFY us and save us from the penalty of our sins. And we need EMPOWERING GRACE to grow us and free us from the power of remaining sin in our lives. Because grace is not just PARDON for my sin. Grace is the POWER to say 'No' to that same sin. So we expect everyone who claims to have experienced the grace of God to be CHANGING AND GROWING by His grace year after year.

### **Rock #3      We want to be missions-minded.**

We won't just sit on this message of grace. We're not going to run from the world. We're going to run headlong into this world with this message of grace, working to connect people to the glory of God... in our own backyard and overseas. We're going to be able to keep doing it year after year because we're going to keep the glory of God high and lifted up as the only EFFECTIVE and LASTING motivation for missions, not just compassion or pity for people.

### **Rock #4      We want to be focused on equipping every believer to do ministry.**

Yes, this is a hospital for sinners, but it's also a training and equipping center for saints. If you're just interested in being sick and weak forever then we're probably not the church for you. We've structured our church so that you can actually get equipped with the tools and training and encouragement that you need to actually do real ministry. We're convinced it's our calling from Scripture – to equip YOU to do the work of ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ! (Ephesians 4:11-12)

**Rock #5      We want to be a praying church!**

All of this has to be bathed in prayer, because we recognize without prayer the ministries of the church will just grind along in the arm of the flesh, regardless of how good they look on the outside. We want to see lasting FRUIT, real changes, breakthroughs, and an outpouring of God's presence and power in our midst - and that only comes by prayer. So we pray as desperate people who recognize that apart from God we can do NOTHING.

**Rock #6      We're committed to staying connected and growing through Small Groups.**

That means we want to be growing bigger and smaller all the time. We don't want to just see the Sunday morning crowd increase and people in small groups stay the same. We want our small groups to be growing and birthing at a rate that is keeping pace with the overall growth of our church. That's one of our biggest commitments!

Small groups are the very HEARTBEAT of our church. The Bible teaches that people change and grow best at close range with other believers who can speak into their life... and by using their own gifts to speak into someone else's life.

Small groups are not just some fad that we're going to get over. Small groups are a ministry structure that we think best enables us to do what God has called us to do - train godly disciples who can handle life effectively by handling God's Word accurately, and please God by living life together according to His Word.

**Rock #7      We're committed to God-focused rather than spectator- and entertainment-driven praise & worship.**

That means we're going to do everything we can to see that the worship leads us to thinking right thoughts about God, and changing our lives and attitudes to fall in line with what He's revealing about Himself to us. We expect the worship at Grace Fellowship to change us. We long for God's presence and power to be displayed in our worship as we're reminded who He is and who we are in light of that. We're not going to use a lot of solos and choirs to sing on Sunday. You, the congregation, are the choir each Sunday. We want you to come ready to enter into worship rather than watching the 'professionals' do it for you.

**Rock #8      We're committed to exalting and proclaiming the SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD!**

This rock, in many ways, might be considered the CORNERSTONE of Grace Fellowship. This rock is critical, and it's presence bleeds over into every other area of our church life. You see it in our worship. You see it in our Small Groups. You see it in our Bible teaching and counseling.

We try to promote and exalt the sovereignty of God in every way that we can, because we're convinced that a proper understanding and appreciation for the sovereignty of God will absolutely change your life and the way you see the world around you, and the way you respond to what takes place in your life.

The doctrine of 'God's Sovereignty' simply means that God is in control. God's sovereignty is His absolute rule and control over all of His creation. Everything happens because He either DIRECTLY causes it or He consciously ALLOWS IT. Nothing enters history that does not come under the complete control of God. That's what the Bible teaches about our God.

We believe that God has a "LOCK" on everything. He LIMITS, ORDERS, CONTROLS and KNOWS all things for His GLORY and our GOOD. That's a biblical summary of the doctrine of God's sovereignty.

## **Transformational Tie between Small Group Ministry and Biblical Counseling**

**By Brad Bigney & Ken Long**

### **The Problem with Small Group Ministry**

Small groups are the ministry that churches initially love but after they head down that path for awhile they come away disappointed. Pastors also *initially* love the idea of a small group ministry because of all the hype they've heard in the latest book they've read or conference they've attended that have led them to believe that all their problems will be solved if they can just get their people connected in a vibrant small group ministry.

While this statement is somewhat exaggerated it still represents the mindset of so many church leaders who start off excited but end up spending a ton of ministry capital trying to establish a small group ministry, only to find out that it's not the magic elixir they'd hoped for. On top of that, it carries with it a whole new set of problems and concerns they feel unprepared to address. For this reason, many small group ministries are constantly in flux, trying to make, and then remake, the ministry over and over again. Imagine that.

So how does a ministry with so much promise leave so many pastors jaded and tossing the idea of small group ministry back onto the "we've tried that before" pile? Well, it's this high percentage of failure, along with the incessant small group ministry 'makeovers,' that compels us to write this chapter.

One of the biggest reasons for failed small group ministries can be symptomatically understood from the following incident that *actually* took place in a church (*not ours, praise God!*).

At the close of their weekly small group meeting, a young couple that had been attending the group hung around until everyone else had left so that they could speak with the leader couple alone. After a few minutes of nervous chit-chat, the young couple began to open up and pour out their hearts about a significant problem they were having in their marriage. The leader couple gave their full attention, listening intently and compassionately, and then they spoke a word of counsel. They said, "With issues like *that*, you should consider joining another group."

Right *there* is the Achilles heel of the entire small group ministry movement. We're convinced that the biggest reason for the high percentage of failed small group ministries and constant 'makeovers' is that churches have not *intentionally* developed their small groups to be a place of grace and growth for all of the walking wounded that are coming through our front doors.

Most churches today have not structured their ministries to get down in the nitty-gritty of people's lives. So when it all begins to surface, the leaders are overwhelmed and ill-equipped to respond in a loving, biblical way. Churches don't know how to give hope or help to real people who have opened up about the struggles they're facing, nor do they have a plan for equipping their small group leaders to do so. The small group ministry either limps along in a superficial way or explodes as leaders become overwhelmed by the issues in people's lives that they were not equipped to deal with effectively.

In this chapter, we want to paint a new picture of a small group ministry that can give hope and help to its people. Even struggling small group ministries can be revitalized by refocusing the purpose of the small groups on spiritual formation *and* by tying the small group ministry to the church's biblical counseling ministry. These two ministries should work hand in hand together – small groups and biblical counseling.

In fact, we would go so far as to say don't start a small group ministry without an equally vital biblical counseling ministry. Don't even think about it; not if your goal is spiritual growth and transformation. If you're happy with superficial 'Yak 'n Snack' groups, then don't worry about a biblical counseling ministry, and don't bother with reading the rest of this chapter. Just make sure your leaders make it absolutely clear to everyone in their group that we're not here to dig into the real stuff we're all wrestling with. Keep it safe. Keep it superficial.

### **The Purpose of Small Group Ministry**

So where should you start? You better start with the purpose of the small group ministry. If that's unstated or unclear, then forget about seeing lives changed, and count on lots of confusion and a high turnover rate with your small group leaders.

So what should be the purpose of the small group ministry? Well, there are a lot of reasons why small groups exist in a church – none of them bad, but a lot of them unclear and peripheral to what's going on in the heart and soul of a church. Often the name attached to the ministry gives the reason for its

existence, for example, Care Groups, Men's Bible Study, Ladies' Groups, and Growth Groups. Many churches looking for a way to meet the personal and physical needs of their people in a loving, decentralized manner will establish Care Groups. Others want their men to dig into the Bible so they have Men's Bible Studies. Still others want to emphasize growth for the kingdom so they have Growth Groups modeled after the principles contained in Carl George's book, *Prepare Your Church for the Future*.

But careful and prayerful thought should be given to the purpose of the small group ministry of any church. Don't just put some chairs in a circle and start one. A small group ministry should directly enhance the primary ministry of the church. So now you have to back up and answer that question. What is the primary ministry of the church? Do you know? It can be seen clearly in Ephesians 4:11-15.

<sup>11</sup> Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. <sup>12</sup> Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. <sup>13</sup> This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ. <sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup> Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. Ephesians 4:11-15 (NLT)

Ephesians 4:11-15 drives home the fact that God has given Spirit-gifted people, "pastors and teachers ... to equip God's people ... (to) build the church, the body of Christ" (4: 11-12). The goal of building up His church is to have all of God's people to "be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ" (4: 13). Or stated another way, "growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church" (4: 15). In other words, "a" or possibly "the" primary purpose of the church, depending on one's theology, is for the whole church to participate with the Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18) in the transformation of God's people to be more like Christ.

So, if spiritual *formation* is the purpose of the church then personal *transformation* should intentionally be the purpose of the small group ministry. Bible study is great. Fellowship is wonderful. Evangelism is essential. But changing and growing to be more like Christ should be the purpose of the small group

ministry. And believe it or not, you can focus on Bible study and still not arrive at personal transformation unless the leaders are trained and reminded to be pointed in that direction.

The way we have seen God use a small group ministry in transforming His people, is for the group to spend an intense time studying the Word of God, or a theological book based on the Scriptures, with an emphasis on applying the truth to each of our lives. You say, “But aren’t most churches and small groups focused on this already?” We don’t think so. Check it out. Most Bible studies are focused on knowledge with possibly some private application considered. The bulk of time is usually dominated by a mini-lecture from the small group leader, while participants dutifully ‘spank the blanks’ in their study guide or workbook. Occasionally the leader will ask some inductive questions about the text, but even then the questions are often focused on facts rather than life application.

And don’t hear what we’re *not* saying. We’re not saying that Bible knowledge is irrelevant; we’re saying it’s not enough. And we’re saying that small groups are the place to push past Bible knowledge and on to life application, so that we can see transformation more and more into the image of Christ. A transformational small group focuses on everyone giving and receiving hope and help from God’s Word to spiritually mature in Christ.

So a transformational group is focused on asking questions with spiritual formation in mind. Take, for instance, a small group discussion of James chapter one. Because of the text, the leader would press each member of the group to consider a personal trial in their own life, and to humbly share it with the others. To spark a spiritual discussion that moves below the surface of ‘Hey, how ya doin’?’ the leader might ask their group this question: “Looking at verse 2, what difficulty or trial are you personally facing right now in your own life?” After hearing from everyone that’s willing to answer the question, a follow-up question might be: “On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, what is your joy quotient right now as you persevere through this God-given trial?”

Notice how the small group leader, through a series of questions, is providing fertile ground for each person to really examine their own attitude of submission to God’s lordship in their life, which is indicated by the current level of joy in the midst of the trial. Obviously, the above discussion would also lead naturally into a meaningful time of prayer for each other that would certainly rise above so many church prayer meetings that are focused on minor surgeries and the problems of other people outside of the group that we’ve never met.



Helping each member of the group to move towards greater submission to God during a trial is the transformational target the small group leader is aiming for. God has commanded us to be joyful in our trials (James 1: 2). So how are we doing? We're not joyful that we have cancer. But we can be joyful that in this horrendous trial our Father's steadfast love, which endures forever (Ps 100:5), will use even this circumstance for His glory and our good. For God's good work to be made complete in us, we have to "count it all joy" when we "meet trials of various kinds" (James 1:2 ESV). In other words, the passage is teaching us to not waste our trials, but to be good stewards of them. Our people need more than just help in understanding this. They need help *doing* it and *living* it. And that's where the small group ministry should focus.

The Word time in a small group should be interactive with everyone sharing where they are in their own lives and encouraging others in their walk. And so often, it's others around us, at close range that can see where God wants to grow us even before we see it ourselves. In a small group setting others can see areas where we need wisdom and prayer (James 1:5). So the small group becomes a greenhouse or incubator for spiritual growth, as we spur one another on to love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24-25), giving hope and help to keep moving forward, by God's grace. But this is all hinged upon allowing others to speak into our lives.

### **The Place of Small Group Ministry in the Overall Church Structure**

The leadership of Grace Fellowship Church believes that the transformational process of becoming "more and more like Christ" is the primary purpose for why God has called us together as a church. So the small group ministry focuses primarily on "personal" transformation for everyone that calls GFC home. For over sixteen years now the leadership at GFC has trumpeted that "small groups are the heart of the church." And that statement makes two things clear: First, the importance of transformation, and, secondly, the decision to make small groups the place or the context by which God accomplishes this. "GFC's Ministry Relationships," (Figure 1) shows how transformation and small groups fit into the overall picture of GFC.

### GFC's Ministry Relationships

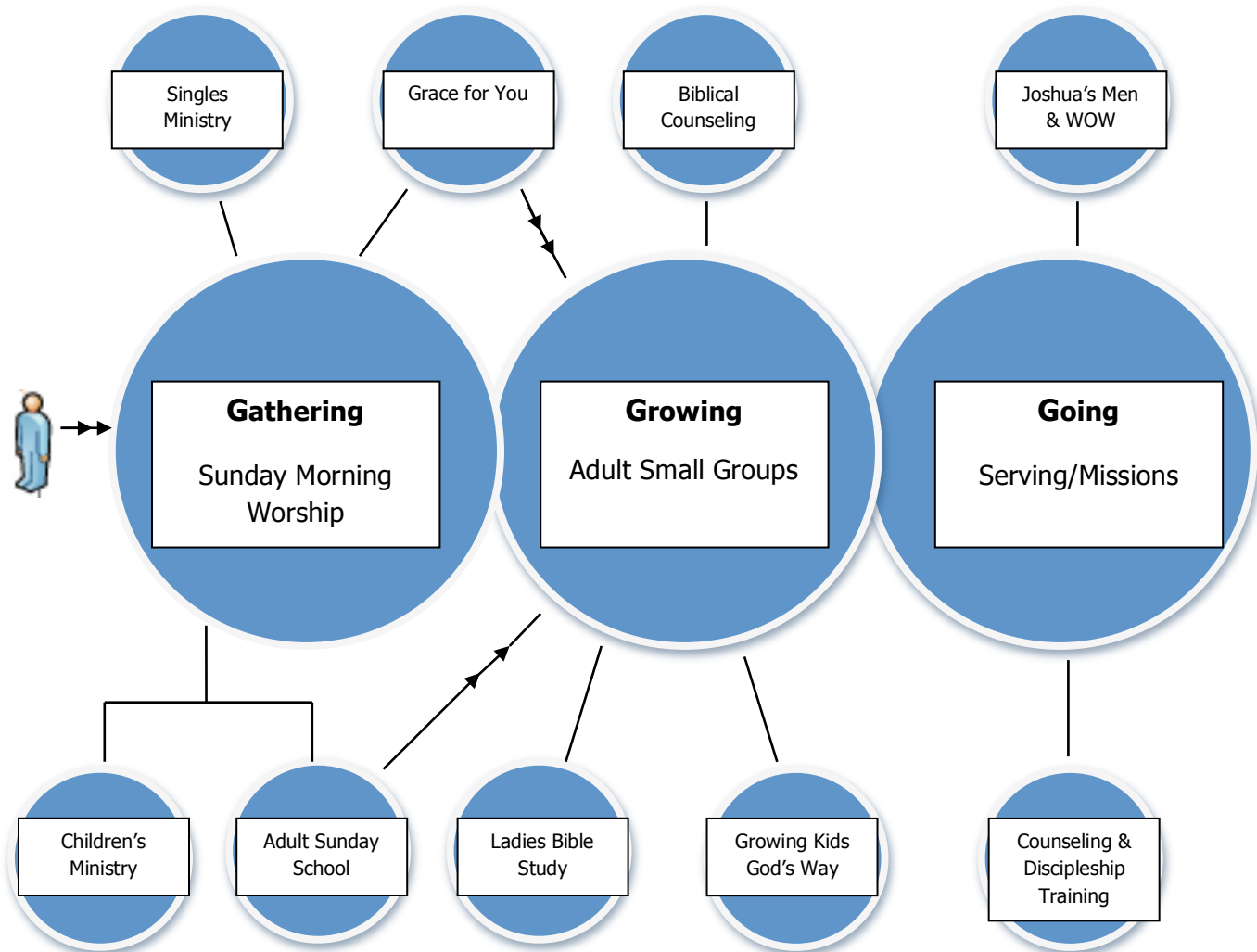


Figure 1

First, notice that the three large circles represent the 3 primary ministry areas of GFC for adults: Gathering, Growing, and Going. As indicated by the person on the far left of the diagram, most people are first exposed to GFC through the "Gathering" or corporate worship services on Sunday. From that first exposure to GFC, newcomers are intentionally directed into a small group where they can form personal and transformational relationships with other believers at close range. Plugging into a small group is represented by the large center circle, "Growing." Once a person is plugged into a small group they're encouraged to look for ways to be serving and giving their life away in ministry to others, both

inside and outside of our church family. This piece of our church life together is represented by the third big circle titled “Going – Serving/Missions.”

We want our people breathing in and breathing out the grace of God in all three circles of “Gathering, Growing, and Going.” Focusing on these three areas of “Gathering, Growing, and Going” is our version of the *Simple Church* presented in Rainer and Geiger’s book of the same title. And it’s freed us up from trying to run dozens of ministries that offer dozens of programs to our people. Instead we’re focused on the promotion and resourcing of three big circles that we think keep our church moving in the right direction and focused on the right things because it produces the right result – disciples of Christ that look more like Jesus and less like themselves at the end of the year.

But God has called us to more than buildings, bodies, and bucks. He’s called us to make disciples; to see people changing and growing, living out the great truths of the Gospel and resurrection hope! Every church should have a yardstick to measure their effectiveness against what God has purposed for them to be. Andy Stanley, along with others, refers to this yardstick as “a win” in the *7 Practices of Effective Ministry*. The leadership of any church should ask themselves what has to happen for their ministry to be “a win.” We’re delighted when we hear someone say, “Oh, I love the preaching and worship” or “I have so many friends here.” But a ‘Win’ for us is when someone says, “Since being a part of this church, I have grown spiritually more than ever before in my life.” For us, that’s a ‘Win’, and by God’s grace we have the joy of hearing this often.

I received an email from someone new in our church family that said,

“I know you probably hear this a lot, but maybe not often enough. You, Ken, the other pastors, and the Grace Family are amazing! My wife and I never felt so ‘discipled’ anywhere else. The Grace family really walks in a God-honoring way. For the first time I can truly say I feel like an actual ‘disciple’ of the LORD instead of just ‘one of the people in the crowd hearing a message’...if that makes sense. Thank you and the church for living it out and creating disciples!”

## Training for Small Group Leaders

Now maybe you're getting excited but you're thinking, "Where am I going to get these leaders who will lead small groups that are more than 'Yak n' Snack' and are focused on transformation? Won't that be a hard sell? Maybe at first, but not if the church leadership makes this one of their top priorities – and it should. For a small group ministry to be focused on transformation you have to make selecting and training your small group leaders a top priority. Your church leadership should be praying, looking, and funneling potential small group leaders into an intentional training process – constantly identifying and raising up new leaders and apprentices. Why? Because not just anyone can do this. We're looking for more than just an outgoing personality and a spiritual pulse!

The small group leader needs to be equipped to carry out the vision of pushing beyond Bible information and on to personal life transformation. Certainly, the small group leader must have "a growing relationship with God and a heart for the people of God in the group" (*Sticky Church*, Larry Osborne, page 71). In addition, guidelines for being a small group leader should contain milestones that demonstrate theological understanding, personal spiritual maturity, and being regularly used by God as an instrument for transformation in someone else's life. Clearly defined expectations for the leader will promote a unified and effective ministry for both the participants of every small group and the small group leaders. Though rigorous, these guidelines help toward fulfilling the desire for the small group leaders to have a fruitful, long-term ministry.

Typically when GFC uses the term "Leader" of a small group, the term refers to either a single male or a married couple. As a couple, husband and wife will both be involved in the spiritual growth and care of their people, but the husband will lead the Word time.

The GFC guidelines for becoming a small group leader are as follows:

1. Are members of Grace Fellowship Church – 1 Peter 5:2-7
2. Have served as an apprentice for a GFC small group and have been recommended by their small group leader by the completion of a Ministry Referral Form – 2 Timothy 2:2
3. Have completed Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling – Romans 15:14; 2 Timothy 2:15
4. Have participated in Joshua's Men or Women of the Word (WOW) leadership training in our church – 1 Timothy 4:16

5. Are demonstrating being “spiritual” and being used by God to “restore others in a spirit of gentleness” in the transformational process – Galatians 6:1-2
6. Have completed the “Small Group Written Interview” and it’s been accepted by the Director of Small Groups and/or Elders
7. Have been interviewed and endorsed by the Director of Small Groups

Everyone who becomes a small group leader first serves for a time in an already established small group as an apprentice (Guidelines #2). This is the time when a small group leader disciples a potential leader for his (and her) growth both spiritually and in the ways of shepherding brothers and sisters in the small group. The leader will continue to give an apprentice increasing opportunities to oversee responsibilities relating to the transformation of the other participants.

Another component of the training for apprentices is completing the *Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling* training. This is the initial 30 hours of biblical counseling training based on the National Association of Nouethetic Counselors (NANC) model. Having this biblical counseling background has been invaluable for our small group leaders. When a soul care issue comes up in small group, the leader has confidence that the Scriptures have answers. By the Spirit’s power, the leader will be able to give hope and even some initial help from God’s Word.

Furthermore, in preparation for leading a small group, both husband and wife are required to complete our leadership training program. We expect our men to go through the Joshua’s Men (JM) program, and we ask their wives to go through the Women of the Word (WOW). JM and WOW are for training leaders in Biblical theology and its practical everyday application to one’s life. For two years, JM and WOW participants meet once a month for 3 hours to discuss the reading assignment by sharing their written answers to the provided questions.

For JM, one year is devoted to working through the majority of *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem. The second year is devoted to reading nine theological books: *Knowing God* by J.I. Packer, *Trusting God* by Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace* by Jerry Bridges, *Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible* by Erwin Lutzer, *Why Small Groups* by C.J. Mahaney, *The Heart of Anger* by Lou Priolo, *Disciplines of a Godly Man* by R. Kent Hughes, *The Complete Husband* by Lou Priolo, and *Spiritual Leadership* by J. Oswald Sanders. Also, during this intense time of training the men and women memorize over 50 verses related to their readings. These two years are an incredible time of equipping and growing! It’s such a joy to

see men and women becoming “like great oaks that the LORD has planted for His own glory” (Isaiah 61:3, NLT).

### **Continual Training for a Small Group Leader**

Once becoming small group leader, the leader is asked to participate in an *Advanced* level of Counseling and Discipleship Training each year. Our main concern is that the small group leaders continue to get the encouragement and fresh vision of what people helping people become more like Christ really looks like. And to keep before them the fact that the Bible assures us that they are more than able to jump into this kind of ministry, even though most of the churches in America have excluded the laity from this, believing that only ordained ministers and those with college degrees in biblical studies are qualified to really help people change and grow in this way. Yet Paul assured the Roman Christians that he was “confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another” (Romans 15:14, NKJV).

### **Necessity for a Counseling Ministry**

As you can imagine significant personal issues will arise in transformational small groups. Typically GFC small group leaders will be able to handle most of the soul care issue that arise in their group but not all of them. Since they are already providing “personal discipleship” for the 8-15 people in their group, people who need “personal long-term intensive discipleship” or what is commonly referred to as “biblical counseling” may need to be cared for by others. For many small group leaders there simply isn’t enough time in their lives to also do long-term biblical counseling.

Fortunately, there is a way to handle all the issues that will arise in transformational small groups. These people that need “personal long-term intensive discipleship” are referred to the church’s counseling center. The issues that may be referred to the counseling center are life dominating sins that manifest themselves as adultery, alcohol or drug abuse, pornography, persistent unbelief, sexual abuse, crippling fear, etc.

Steve Viars, Senior Pastor of Faith Baptist Church of Lafayette, Indiana, illustrates this by telling the story of a person in a boat that is going down the river but then gets trapped in an eddy, which keeps on bumping into the shore and no longer making any progress down the river. General and personal discipleship are represented by the person making progress down the river or toward growth in Christ-

likeness. The eddy represents a life dominating sin that impedes any spiritual growth. Not until the person is freed from the eddy or, in real life, freed from the sin will spiritual growth again occur. To get out of the eddy someone comes into the boat to help the person see their problem and move again down the river. This getting into the boat or helping by another believer represents the role of biblical counseling whereby a believer is helped by loving confrontation and instruction from the Scriptures. Hopefully, repentance will take place and the believer will be able to progress along the paths of general and personal discipleship or, according to the analogy, the boat will continue floating down the river.

As can be seen, a transformational small group ministry is dependent upon the availability of a biblical counseling ministry to care for the people requiring long-term personal intensive discipleship. If long-term biblical counseling is not available, a well-intended transformational small group ministry will eventually shift focus. Since there will remain people in the group who are ensnared in their sin, talking about continual change and growth will become frustrating and even foolish over time. People with problems who catch the desire for sanctification will lose hope when there is no one who is spiritual and able to come alongside them (Galatians 6:1-2). Here is where a group that originally started out with the purpose of transformation will make a purpose change to a Bible study or to a care group, which now focuses on acquiring more Bible information or on changing the circumstances. The leaders of a church need to seriously ask themselves, "Is this the direction that is most pleasing to God for our people?"

We have seen churches, that want to have a transformational small group ministry, but for one reason or another, do not have a developed biblical counseling ministry, eventually have difficulties. Either the pastoral staff is swamped with counseling requests or the small group ministry becomes less focused on sanctification. Neither situation is satisfactory.

Conversely, the reverse scenario of a church having a counseling center but no small group ministry has its inherent problems as well. Churches that do not have small groups for personal discipleship may be faced with an inordinate number of biblical counseling cases. This is a possibility especially under transformational preaching and teaching. The people become hungry to change in the direction that they have been challenged. For help with personal discipleship they turn to the biblical counseling ministry. Many of these people could be effectively cared for in a transformational small group ministry. Also, once folks have been helped with intensive discipleship through biblical counseling, where do they turn for ongoing personal discipleship if transformational small groups do not exist?

What we're advocating is that a transformational church should consider having an interdependent biblical counseling ministry and small group ministry. Our observations have been that this model is suitable for both small and large churches. In 1996, as a church plant, Grace Fellowship adopted this model when there were only 80 attending on a Sunday morning. Today, with the average Sunday attendance around 1,800, the emphasis on growing in Christ-likeness remains unchanged. We're thankful that about 75-80% of the adults who call GFC home are participating in a transformational small group. For these sixteen years the purpose of GFC has remained unchanged along with the necessity for having an interdependent biblical counseling ministry and small group ministry.

In fact, these ministries and their interconnectedness are more needed now than ever before for Grace Fellowship to be a transformational church. A major concern for larger churches is how to spiritually care for all the people that God brings through the doors on a Sunday morning. Pastors are to equip the saints for the work of ministry, not do it all. Works of ministry for lay people should be more than just keeping the nursery; it should include caring for the souls of others (Galatians 6:1-2; Romans 15:14). The integrating of a small group and biblical counseling ministry fosters Ephesians 4:11-12 involvement by all the peoples of the church. Each small group leader will typically care for 8-15 people.

With this model, our pastors don't spend the bulk of their time directly caring for the people, but spend a greater percentage of their time assisting and caring for the small group leaders as they shepherd the people in our church family. Another pastor leads the counseling ministry, which primarily utilizes trained lay counselors. This fulfills the God given mandate for pastor-teachers to help all their people be involved in ministry to their level of giftedness, Rom 12:4-8; 1 Cor 12:7.

We currently have about sixty transformational small groups, and the counseling ministry is usually caring for 30-40 individuals or couples involved in long-term counseling, or what we would call intensive discipleship. A team of about thirty counselors does counseling, and fourteen of these are NANC (National Association of Nouthetic Counselors) certified counselors. We're thrilled that the majority of the counseling cases, about 60%, are being done by lay counselors.

The hand of God has been so active among us, as we've just been trying to humbly keep up. As Grace Fellowship Church began we didn't have all the details of ministry worked out but we did start with the idea of not just doing church but of deeply desiring to cooperate with God in His work of transforming



the people of His church (2 Corinthians 3:18). In response to our meager efforts, we've seen God do exceedingly, abundantly beyond all that we could ask or think (Ephesians 3:20).

### Recommended Reading

(Note: We have found these books to be helpful as we have wrestled with God toward finding the Small Group ministry He would have for us here at Grace Fellowship Church. We certainly do not concur with or practice everything within these books but have appreciated their thoughtfulness and the insight regarding how Small Group can be useful as a vehicle of life transformation by God.)

Larry Osborne, ***Sticky Church*** (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008).

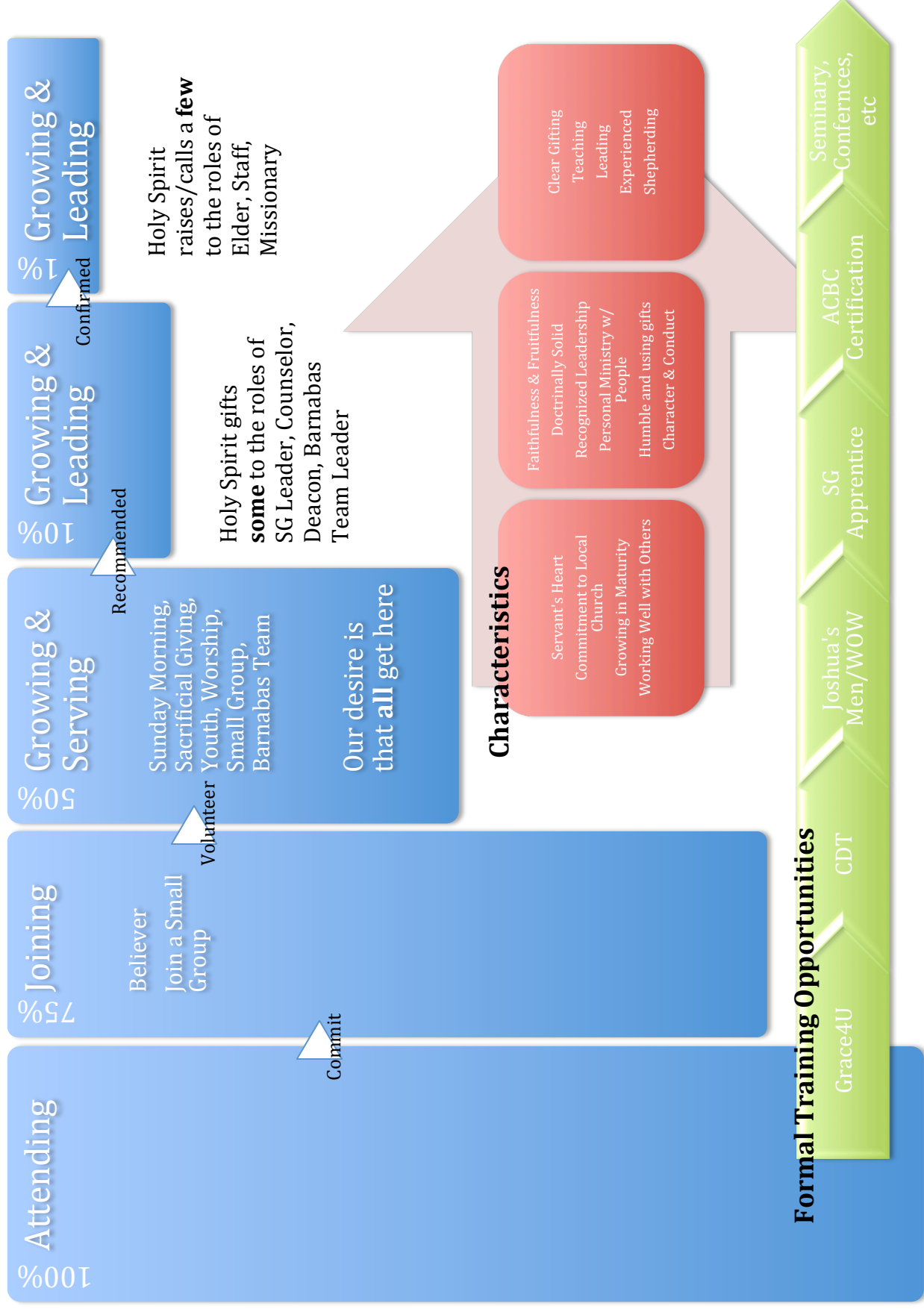
C.J. Mahaney, ed., ***Why Small Groups?*** (Gaithersburg, MD: Sovereign Grace Ministries, 1996).

Andy Stanley and Bill Willits, ***Creating Community*** (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004).

Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner, and Lane Jones, ***Seven Practices of Effective Ministry*** (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2004).

Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger, ***Simple Church*** (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2006).

# Leadership Development, Recognition and Appointment at GFC



## Joshua's Men and WOW

Grace Fellowship Church equips all SG leaders & counselors through a two year theology study. This course is called Joshua's Men for men and Women of the Word (WOW) for women. The study is a monthly meeting to discuss the book/chapters read, review study questions, and review scripture memory verses. These meetings take place on Saturday mornings from 7-10 a.m. The groups are no larger than 15 members.

### **First Year**

The first year of study is a survey of Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem. The coursework includes chapters 2-8, 10-13, 15-28, 30-43 and 51-57 (908 pages).

Joshua's Men **scripture memory** for the year of studying systematic theology:

Psalms 1:1-2	Job 42:2	Galatians 2:20
II Timothy 3:16-17	Nehemiah 9:6	John 10:27-28
Exodus 33:13-15	Colossians 3:18-19	James 4:7-8
Romans 1:18-20	Ephesians 2:1-5	Ephesians 1:3-6
Romans 8:28-29	John 1:14	II Corinthians 5:9-10
Psalms 115:3	Romans 3:23-24	

WOW **scripture memory** for the year of studying systematic theology:

II Timothy 3:16-17	John 1:14	James 4:7-8
Psalms 145:1-3	I Timothy 2:5-6	Revelation 4:11
Nehemiah 9:6	Romans 8:12-14	II Corinthians 5:9-10
Psalms 51:1-4	Ephesians 1:3-6	
Job 42:2	Galatians 2:20-21	

The assigned scripture memory passages are biblical truths paralleling the theological reading for that same month.

### **Second Year**

The second year of study is a **survey of books** for discipleship and personal spiritual growth. Joshua's Men covers the following books (title, author, number of pages):

*Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders, 179  
*Knowing God*, J.I. Packer, 279  
*Trusting God*, Jerry Bridges, 232  
*The Discipline of Grace*, Jerry Bridges, 242

*Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible*, Erwin Lutzer, 212  
*Why Small Groups*, C.J. Mahaney, 113  
*The Heart of Anger*, Lou Priolo, 200  
*Disciplines of a Godly Man*, R. Kent Hughes, 230  
*The Complete Husband*, Lou Priolo, 292

Total number of pages read: 1979

Joshua's Men **scripture memory** for the year studying the book survey:

Romans 12:9-11	Hebrews 12:1-4
Jeremiah 9:23-24	I Peter 3: 14-17
I Chronicles 29:11-12	I Peter 3:7
Psalms 73:25-28	Ephesians 6:4
I Corinthians 15:10	

WOW covers the **following books** (title, author, number of pages – 1720 pages read):

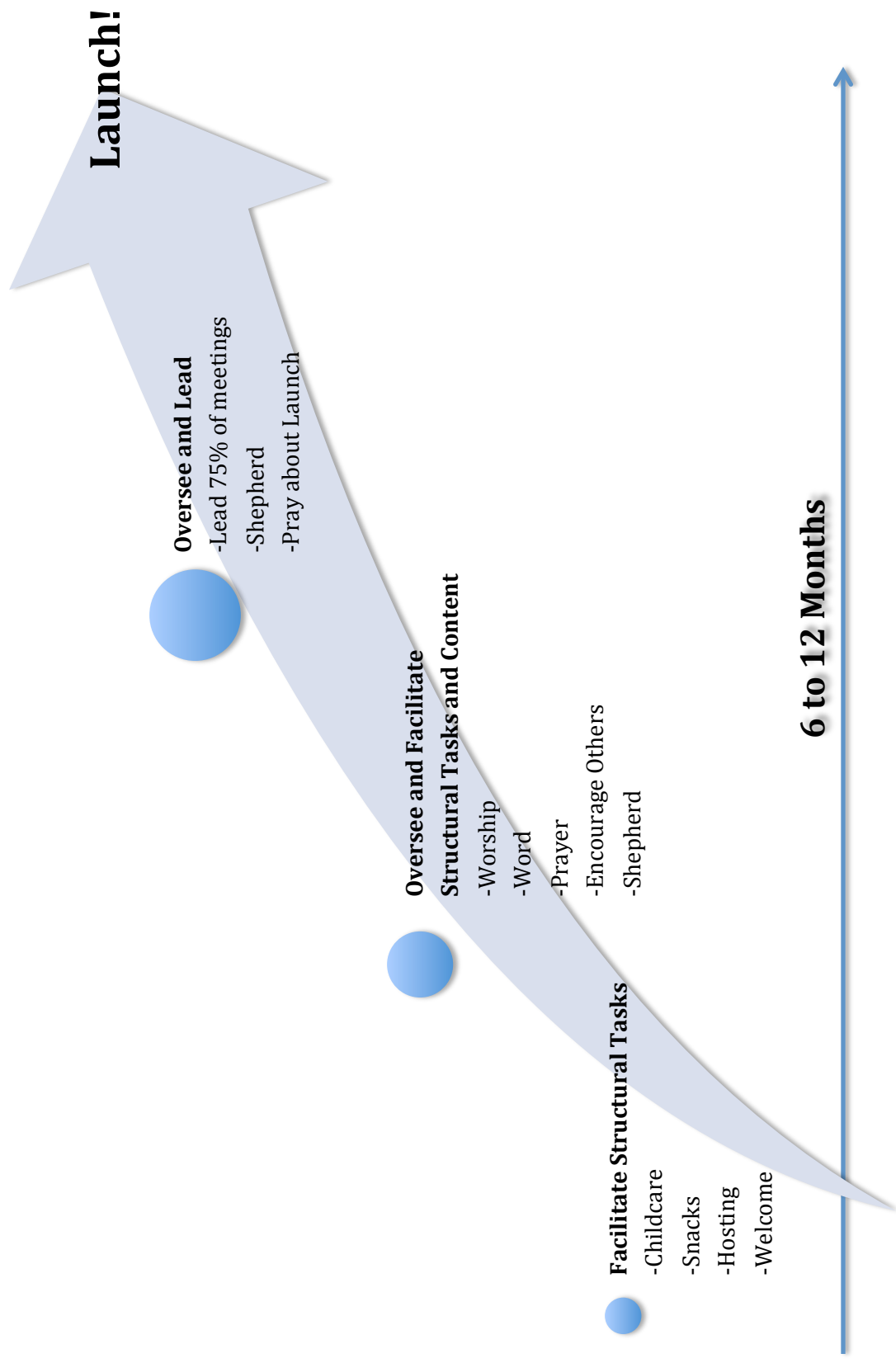
Knowing God, J.I. Packer, 279  
Trusting God, Jerry Bridges, 232  
The Discipline of Grace, Jerry Bridges, 242  
Seven Reasons Why You Can Trust the Bible, Erwin Lutzer, 212  
Why Small Groups, C.J. Mahaney, 113  
The Enemy Within, Kris Lundgaard, 150  
Helper By Design, Elyse Fitzpatrick, 208  
Peacemaking For Families, Ken Sande, 200  
The Dangerous Duty of Delight, John Piper, 84

WOW **scripture memory** for the year studying the book survey:

Psalms 73:25-28  
Hebrews 12:1-4  
Jeremiah 9:23-24  
I Chronicles 29:11-12  
Psalm 19:7-9  
I Corinthians 15:10  
Genesis 2:18  
Colossians 1:19-20

## **Small Group Apprentice Pathway**

Ephesians 4:11-12 “...to prepare God’s people for works of service.”



## **Grace Fellowship Church Small Group Leader Guidelines**

Since “small groups are the heart of Grace Fellowship Church,” there are a few, important Guidelines for the Leaders. These promote a unified and effective ministry for both the participants of every Group and the Leaders. Our desire is for the Leaders to have a fruitful, long-term ministry.

Typically when the term “Leader” is used, it refers to a single male or a married couple. As a couple, husband and wife will both be involved in the spiritual growth and care of their people. Yes, the husband will lead the Word time. If there is a significant difference of opinion between the husband and wife, they are to resolve it as they do a marital issue – in a way pleasing to God.

### **Pre-requisites for becoming a SmallGroup Leader:**

1. are Members of Grace Fellowship Church – 1 Peter 5:2-7
2. have completed Fundamentals of Biblical Counseling – Romans 15:14; 2 Timothy 2:15
3. have participated in Joshua’s Men – 1 Timothy 4:16
4. are demonstrating being “spiritual” and being used by God to “restore others in a spirit of gentleness” in the transformational process – Galatians 6:1-2
5. have served as Apprentice for a GFC SmallGroup and have been recommended by their SmallGroup Leader – 2 Timothy 2:2
6. have completed the “SmallGroup Written Interview” and have had it approved by the Director of Small Groups and/or Elders
7. have been interviewed and endorsed by the Director of SmallGroups

### **Continuing Guidelines for Being a SmallGroup Leader:**

1. are demonstrating being “spiritual” and being used by God to “restore others in a spirit of gentleness” in the transformational process – Galatians 6:1-2
2. are participating in the SmallGroup Leaders Meetings – Hebrews 10:24-25
3. are attending Counseling and Discipleship Training each year – 1 Timothy 4:7b-8
4. are helping their people grow to be more like Christ – Ephesians 4:15

## **Apprentice Qualities**

Apprentices often already possess the shepherding qualities needed for leading small groups. They just need a little practice and some accountability to strengthen weak areas! **Before recommending a couple as apprentices**, check to see how they line up with Grace's eight biblical guidelines. *All* of these qualities may not yet be in place, but that is what apprenticeship is for!

### **Biblical Guidelines**

1. Aligned theologically with Grace Fellowship's *Statement of Faith*, 1 Peter 3:8.
2. Growing in the faith and in their relationship with Christ, 2 Peter 3:18.
3. Be likeable; we should want to be around them, they are winsome, Ephesians 4:2.
4. Have a biblically healthy family life, Ephesians 5.
5. Characterized by a healthy submission to the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit, church leadership and their small group leaders.
6. Exhibit a teachable spirit and lifestyle of humility, Isaiah 66:2, 1 Peter 5:5.
7. Show aptitude for facilitating group discussion through the Scriptures, and for general counseling needs within a group, Colossians 3:16.
8. Influentially used by the Holy Spirit in the lives around them, Romans 15:5-7.

### **Steps to Making Apprentices**

1. Prayerfully consider how *you* are modeling the eight qualities above.
2. Ask God regularly to show you potential apprentices.
3. Assess "potentials" in light of the eight qualities above.
4. Pray fervently and faithfully, asking God to mold your "potentials" in areas of weakness.
5. Call Tyson to talk over the strengths and weaknesses of your potential apprentices.
6. Find out if God is giving your "potentials" a desire to serve as apprentices.
7. Go over the Small Group Leader Guidelines with them.
8. Decide with God and Tyson to formalize the couple as your APPRENTICES.
9. Keep praying, model shepherding, give them opportunities to practice, and move them along the Apprentice Pathway!

# **Small group leader Written Interview**

*Grace Fellowship Church*

## **Pastoral**

1. What is your understanding of the ministry or work of a small group leader?
2. Describe your understanding of being committed to a “team” approach to leadership and pastoring at Grace Fellowship? Are you able and willing to keep confidentialities?
3. What does it mean to “equip the saints to do the work of ministry” (Eph. 4:11-12)? How do you see GFC doing this? What abilities / gifts do you think you have that can strengthen our leadership team to do this even more effectively?
4. Will your family and work responsibilities permit you time and energy to serve GFC as a Small group leader?
5. How would you deal with an accusation against another church leader? Has this come up in the past for you? How did you handle it then?



**Personal**

1. Briefly describe your own personal salvation testimony. What do you think are the essential elements of the Gospel? Briefly describe your approach and method for sharing the Gospel with someone (include the elements you listed).

2. Are you at peace with all men? Are there any broken relationships that need to be reconciled?

3. Do you understand and agree with GFC's policy on public consumption of alcohol within a ministry capacity? What is your position and personal habit regarding the use of alcohol?

4. How do you practice the habit of Bible reading and prayer in your own life?

5. How well do you respond to admonition or rebuke?

6. What do you believe are your spiritual gifts? (See Eph. 4:11-12; Rom. 12:6-8; I Cor. 12:4-11, 28)

7. How have these gifts been affirmed by others, or what opportunities have you had in the past to exercise these gifts?

**Family**

1. According to the qualifications for a small group leader (elder) listed in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1, are there any behavior patterns in your life at this time that would disqualify you from serving, or is there anything in your life that someone in the church or community might consider questionable?

2. If there has been divorce in the past, please briefly comment on your spiritual condition and the circumstances at that time.

3. Are you singly and totally devoted to your wife, and what does total devotion to your wife look like to you and to her? How are you leading your wife in devotion to Christ? Your kids, if any?

4. Have you, your wife, or any of your children been through counseling before (biblical counseling here at the church or counseling outside of Grace Fellowship Church)? What problems were you experiencing? How was it resolved?

5. Please have your wife take a few minutes to write out her testimony here.

### **Church Life**

1. Describe the impact that Grace Fellowship Church has had on your life.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How do you support Grace Fellowship Church financially? Do you tithe to Grace Fellowship Church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What do you do to welcome and integrate new people into the life of our church?

### **Doctrinal**

1. Please re-read the Grace Fellowship Statement of Faith and Doctrinal Statement. Are there any parts of either of these documents that you disagree with or where your personal beliefs are not consistent with our church's position. Are there any doctrinal beliefs you hold that are unusual, unorthodox, or different than Grace Fellowship? Please explain.

2. How is the Bible different from other books we possess? Describe briefly how you would defend the (1) inspiration, (2) authority, and (3) sufficiency of Scripture.

3. What actually happened to mankind when Adam sinned (Genesis 3)? What is your view of sin and how does it affect mankind?

4. What do you believe the Bible teaches about the perseverance of the saints. Please discuss both the presence of habitual sin in a professed believer's life and the potential for a true believer to loose their salvation? Should a believer who consistently walks in sin, refusing to struggle against it, still be given assurance of salvation?

5. What do you believe the Bible teaches about the process of growing and changing in a believer's life (sanctification and personal holiness)? To what degree is change accomplished by the working of the Holy Spirit and how much depends on the obedience of the individual believer?

*Small Group Written Interview*

6. What is your understanding of the purpose of small groups and how does God use them for our good and His glory?

7. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the salvation of an individual?

8. If an unforeseen personal, or moral problem arose in your life which might bring shame and reproach on the church, would you be willing to step aside -- without contention and murmuring -- for the peace and unity of the body?

9. What is your position on church discipline? To what extent are we to provide grace and mercy to people under our care as Small group leaders. How do you decide when the sin has been blatant enough to warrant progressing through the chain of church discipline? How would you deal with a brother in the church who was communicating doctrinal error?

## Small Groups FAQ

### **What is the purpose of a small group?**

Small groups are for the purpose of *transformation*; growing in our relationship with God and each other.

### **Why should I be in a small group?**

It is our conviction that people need to be in a small group in order to be cared for adequately. The idea that we are to exist as a part of a community is consistent throughout Scriptures in the 'one another' passages. (Romans 15:14; Hebrews 3:13; I Thessalonians 5:11)

### **Isn't Sunday worship time and my own personal Bible study enough for my spiritual growth?**

Life change occurs best in the context of small groups. Teaching, training and worship can happen in a large gathering, but believers whose Christian experience consists only of large group gatherings or their own private study are missing the critical link to growth – the “iron sharpening iron” (Proverbs 27:17) that takes place when a close group of people begin to “stimulate one another to love and good deeds” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

### **What happens at a small group meeting?**

Every small group is alike and yet different. Because relationships are the key element, each group will take on the personality of the small group leader who leads them and the people who are a part of each group. Yet, the agenda of every group is very similar because when they gather they **welcome**, **worship**, 'do' the **word** and **work**.

**Welcome**- a 'get acquainted' activity and switch gears to the purpose of gathering together.

**Worship**- singing a few praise and worship songs, reading a portion of Scripture, praying short sentence prayers that exalt God.

**Word**- discussing Scripture through various materials and studies with the goal to live it out. James 1:22 *“But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves”*. When we gather on Sundays, we hear the Word proclaimed, but when we gather as a small group the objective is to help each other “do” the Word.

**Work**- this time of sharing naturally leads to ministry as we seek to “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2) through prayer and service opportunities.

**How can I join a small group?**

For information about a particular group, call the small group leader. If you have questions about which small group to join, contact the church office at 371-7880 or [smallgroup@graceky.org](mailto:smallgroup@graceky.org) . All of the groups are open groups ready to welcome additional people at any time. However, since our small groups are focused on relationships and driven by the desire to minister to one another, there may be groups that have reached their maximum capacity and are prayerfully waiting to birth into two new groups before additional people are added.

**Who cares for the children at small group?**

Some small groups offer childcare and have a caregiver weekly.

**When and where do the small groups meet?**

Groups meet throughout the week. Most of the small groups meet in homes of a group member. A few groups meet in the church building.