

WHY WE SHOULD BIRTH NEW GROUPS

GROUPWORDS

One of the most important, ongoing habits of every successful Small Group ministry is the “birthing” of new groups. It is never easy but always important.

Of course, the term finds its origin in the family as children are born. And the analogy is very appropriate to Small Groups. Think about how it works and how it feels for a Small Group to give birth to another Small Group. Birthing involves pain, separation and some sense of sadness for what has been lost. But it also involves celebration, joy and appreciation for the new life that has been given and the excitement of what lies ahead. There is clearly a sense of sacrificial joy!

But what should be the focus of this new birth? How do we do it?

Carl George has written extensively on church growth and small group ministry. In his book, **Nine Keys to Effective Small Group Leadership**, he writes:

The birthing of new groups is not based on group division so much as on leadership multiplication. (p. 58)

When you as leader focus on birthing, it's hard to manage because you're dealing with the entire group. Instead, focus on the leadership nucleus, and the role of the apprentice leader in particular. Birthing then becomes one of the consequences of handling the apprentice-development process well. (p. 67)

The best place to find these leaders is in your group. And the best way to train them is in your group. So ... how do you spot a rising Small Group leader?

1. Pray regularly for them to surface.
2. Look for someone who takes the group seriously.
3. Observe them as they perform tasks and work with people.
4. Make sure they are spiritually mature.
5. Make sure they are emotionally mature.
6. Make sure they are socially mature.
7. Slowly begin to give them ministry opportunities.
8. Occasionally ask them to lead the group with a lesson you have prepared.
9. Give them honest feedback and affirmation.
10. Ask them to write their own lesson.

Is the goal of our Small Group Ministry to have close fellowship? Of course. How about a deeper understanding of God's Word? Absolutely. But think about the future. As we grow larger, who will lead future groups? Our Small Group vision must also include new groups which means new leaders. May God continue to lead us.

Because of a Cross,
Bob Chisholm