

## DO YOU REALLY LEAD? GROUPWORDS

Small groups have a power to reach people at a depth that few ministries in the past have been able to do. Care increases, accountability expands, commitment deepens, and involvement climbs. And these are just a few of the benefits.

Among the many powerful elements that come together to make a small group work, the leader probably has the greatest impact. So ... what is the role of a small group leader? What best maximizes a leader's impact? Consider the following crucial elements:

- **LEADING** — Of course, you may be called a small group leader. But do you really lead? Here's a quick test ...

***DO YOU LEAD BY YOUR ACTIONS?*** When it's time for your group to meet, are you on time, prepared, and visibly active in making people feel accepted? Is your warmth and acceptance noticeable in your actions?

***DO YOU LEAD IN YOUR ATTITUDES?*** Would you say that excitement, authenticity, joy, and anticipation are fair descriptions of your emotional disposition? If your group members were blindfolded during your meeting, could they still sense your leadership and influence?

***DO YOU LEAD WITH YOUR EXPECTATIONS?*** Do your group members feel that you want them to simply “show up” or do they know that your goal is for them to “grow up” becoming a mature group with a growing sense of ministry and service to others? Do they know that the goal is not just “InReach” but also “OutReach?”

- **LISTENING** — Listen with more than your ears; do more than simply hear. Empathize with your eyes, affirm with appropriate touch, and clarify with verbal questions and comments. Use your whole body to send a clear message that you care.
- **LEARNING** — Your group will no doubt learn from you. But the whole dynamic will change in a positive way when you, as the leader, begin to learn from your group. Share in their spiritual journey by doing what you ask them to do. Becoming more transparent and vulnerable about your own growth will encourage theirs.
- **LOVING** — The key is unconditional love! It takes more than words to prove our commitment and love; it takes sacrifice. What are you willing to sacrifice for the spiritual growth of your group?

Leading ... Listening ... Learning ... Loving. It's a challenge that is fleshed out for us in the life of Jesus. After all, he too had a group.

Because of a Cross,  
Bob Chisholm