

A Discipleship.org Resource

Foreword by Thom Rainer

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Discipleship That Fits

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Harrington, Bobby, 1958-

Discipleship that fits : the five kinds of relationships God uses to help us grow / Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-310-52261-4 (softcover)

1. Discipling (Christianity) I. Title.

BV4520.H374 2016

pages cm

253-dc23

2015030233

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Published in association with the literary agency of Mark Sweeney and Associates, Bonita Springs, Florida 34135.

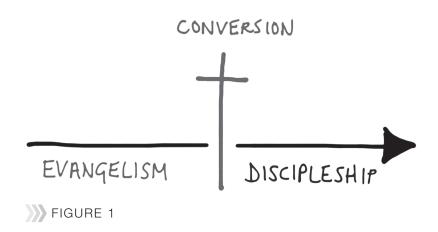
Cover design: LUCAS Art and Design Interior design: Kait Lamphere

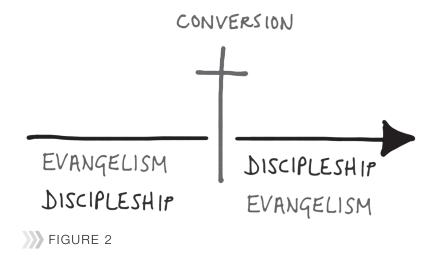
Printed in the United States of America

Chapter Two

YOU'RE NOT CRAMMING FOR AN EXAM

Discipleship, Evangelism, and the Cross





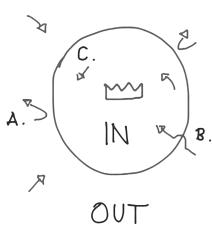


FIGURE 3

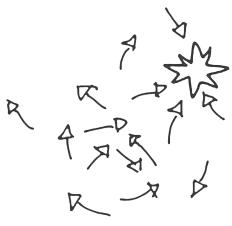


FIGURE 4

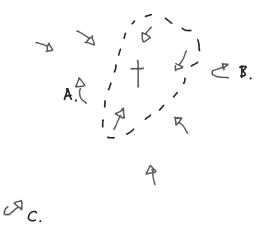


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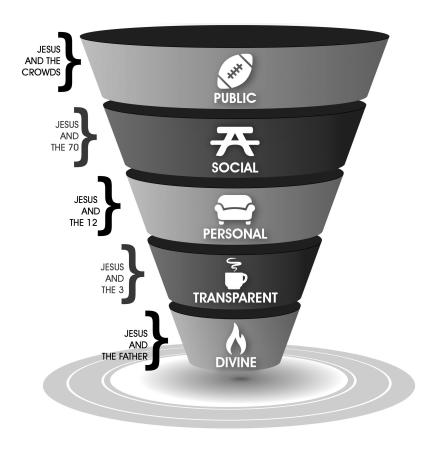
Chapter Three

THE BIG IDEA TO CHANGE YOUR VIEW OF CHURCH

The Five Contexts of Discipleship

Context	Size	Focus	Distance
Public	100s	Engaging with an outside resource	12'+
Social	20–70	Sharing snapshots that build affinity	4'-12'
Personal	4–12	Revealing private information	18"-4'
Transparent	2–4	Living in vulnerability and openness	0"-18"
Divine	Alone with God	Being with your Creator and Redeemer	Inner world





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Context	Major Expression	Gospel Passages	What Happened
Public	Jesus and	Matthew 5:1-2	Sermon on the Mount
	the crowds	John 6:1-2	Feeding of the 5,000
		Mark 6:34	Compassion for the shepherd-less
Social	Jesus and	Luke 10:1	The 70 are sent out
	the 70	Matthew 9:9-13	Eating with Matthew's
		Luke 19	tax collector friends
			Party at the home of Zacchaeus
Personal	Jesus and	John 13	Washing the
	the 12	Matthew	disciples' feet
		8:23–27	Calming the storm
		Mark 8:27-33	Confession (and rebuke) of Peter
Transparent	Jesus and	Luke 9:28-36	Transfiguration
	the 3	Mark 10:35-45 Matthew 26:36-38	James and John's
			request
			Looking for prayer support at Gethsemane
Divine	Jesus and	Mark 1:35	Waking early to pray
50	the Father	Luke 6:12	Before calling the
		John 5:19	Twelve
			Jesus does only what he sees the Father doing

Context	Size	Focus	Distance	Learning from Jesus	Church Expression	Outcomes
Public	100s	Engaging with an outside resource	12	Jesus and the crowds	"Sundays"	Inspiration Movementum Preaching
Social	20–70	Sharing snapshots that build affinity	4'-12'	Jesus and the 70	Missional	Community Mission Practice
Personal	4–12	Revealing private information	18"-4"	Jesus and the 12	Small groups	Closeness Support Challenge
Transparent	2-4	Living in vul- nerability and openness	0"-18"	Jesus and the 3	Deepest friendships; marriage	Intimacy Openness Impact
Divine	Alone with God	Being with your Creator and Redeemer	Inner world	Jesus and the Father	Personal walk	Identity Destiny Truth

Chapter Five

WHAT THE BIG DOES WELL

Discipleship in the Public Context

GETTING STARTED

- 1. (For church leaders:) Gather your key leaders and determine the three core outcomes that are best accomplished in the weekend gatherings at your church. How will you know when you are doing these things well, yet without slipping into perfectionism?
- 2. In your context, how do people demonstrate that they are being inspired by God? How do they respond to that inspiration? Whether or not you are a church leader, how can you play your part in building a culture that expects the inspiration of meeting with Jesus?
- 3. What can you do specifically to build the sense of movementum at your public worship services? What can you do similarly through social media?
- 4. Does anything need to change in the way your community handles preaching, particularly if it is one of the key outcomes of your public worship? Think about not just the content but also the practicalities, mechanics, evaluation, and ways people are called to respond.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE PUBLIC CONTEXT

- Ferguson, Dave. *The Big Idea: Focus the Message, Multiply the Impact.* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007.
- Kauflin, Bob. Worship Matters: Leading Others to Encounter the Greatness of God. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008.
- Kirkpatrick, Rich. *The Six Hats of the Worship Leader*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.
- Malm, Jonathan. *Unwelcome: 50 Ways Churches Drive Away First-Time Visitors.* Los Angeles: Center for Church Communication, 2014.
- Stanley, Andy. Communicating for a Change. Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2006.

Chapter Six

THE MISSING LINK

Understanding the Social Context

Year	Number of Christians	Percent of Roman Empire
AD 40	1,000	0.0017%
AD 350	34 million	56.5%



Chapter Seven

MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES DEMYSTIFIED

Discipleship in the Social Context

GETTING STARTED

- 1. (For church leaders:) With your key leaders, think through how you can wisely release the first generation of missional community leaders. Brainstorm what you don't know how to do—and who you can learn from in order to maximize your fruitfulness.
- 2. In your context, what about your existing community life is rich and abundant, and what requires some challenge and development? Take time to apply these questions to your own life as well!
- 3. How can you raise up the value of living on a common mission? Are you personally being called to pioneer in this realm? What is your first "next step"?
- 4. How might making space for everyone to practice their spiritual gifts end up tangibly enhancing your church's leadership pipeline? What can you do to be an equipper and releaser of others?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

- Breen, Mike, and Alex Absalom. *Launching Missional Communities: A Field Guide*. Pawleys Island, SC: 3DM, 2010.
- Frost, Michael, and Alan Hirsch. *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st-Century Church*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013.
- Halter, Hugh, and Matt Smay. *The Tangible Kingdom: Creating Incarnational Community; The Posture and Practices of Ancient Church Now.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008.
- McNeal, Reggie. *Missional Communities: The Rise of the Post-Congregational Church.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011.
- Vanderstelt, Jeff. Saturate: Being Disciples of Jesus in the Everyday Stuff of Life. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015.

CREATING A GREAT SMALL GROUP

Discipleship in the Personal Context

GETTING STARTED

- 1. (For church leaders:) If your church is bound to an adult Sunday School model, explore reformatting that model into small groups that meet at that same time. This may be a much easier transition for many churches, especially when their members live busy lives and cannot easily find additional times to meet. Just make sure that it is a relational experience (in addition to Bible study) and that everyone also meets regularly in some fashion outside the Sunday school class. Perhaps the outside meeting will happen every month or two.
- 2. (For church leaders:) With your leadership team, consider how your small groups, leader huddles, or Sunday school groups can be repositioned to be more explicitly about discipleship.
- 3. How can you help your existing small group become more focused on discipleship? What would this look like in practice?
- 4. Teach everyone, repeatedly, to expect relational conflicts and to plan to work through them. How can you help others not to allow relational problems to undermine their group? Is there anyone in your life right now whom you need to forgive? Choose not to allow room for the enemy to operate in that relationship.

- 5. Do you (or those around you) ever expect to experience a deeper level of closeness in a Personal Context than is realistic? How might a better grasp of the difference in outcomes between the Personal and Transparent Contexts help resolve this issue?
- 6. How are you deliberately making room for personal support outside of formal meetings? Checking in with your fellow group members now and then is a great way for people to pray for and help each other in the day-to-day affairs of their lives.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE PERSONAL CONTEXT

- Coleman, Robert. *Master Plan of Evangelism*. Grand Rapids: Revell, 2010. Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2012.
- Howerton, Rick. A Different Kind of Tribe: Embracing the New Small-Group Dynamic. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2012.
- Putman, Jim, and Bobby Harrington. *DiscipleShift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples*, Exponential Series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Putman, Jim, et al. Real-Life Discipleship Training Manual: Equipping Disciples Who Make Disciples. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2010.
- Reed, Ben. Starting Small: The Ultimate Small Group Blueprint. Rainer Publishing, 2013.

Chapter Eleven

BUILDING THE CLOSEST RELATIONSHIPS

Discipleship in the Transparent Context

GROUP COVENANT

Where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them. (Matthew 18:20)

The purpose of this group is to experience deep, accelerated transformation at the heart level in the context of safe, Christ-centered friendships.

I commit to the following:

- REGULAR ATTENDANCE. I will attend every meeting unless providentially hindered no
 exceptions. I understand that I will have to say "no" to important things in order to meet
 this commitment, and I am willing to do so.
- DOING THE WORK. I will complete the work assigned to the group and will discipline myself to be prepared for our meetings.
- COMPLETE TRANSPARENCY. I recognize that in order to grow in spiritual maturity, I must openly share my life with this group – the good, the bad, and the ugly.
- FINISHING WELL. I understand that the members of this group will make a significant investment in me. Since it is unfair to them for me to quit, I will be fully engaged in the group for the entire season.
- TOTAL CONFIDENTIALITY. I will treat what is shared in our meetings as sacred by keeping our conversations to myself.
- LEADING OTHERS. At some point, I will partner with Jesus in starting a group like this with other men.
- PRAYING FOR MY BROTHERS. I will regularly pray for the guys in this group specifically for God to give them wisdom, endurance, and an increasing hunger for Him.

Name	 Date	
	 9 	

GETTING STARTED

- 1. Transparent Context groups are easy to start and flexible—so how can you jump into one? They can be started quickly as an add-on in a traditional church, or they can be developed with little supervision in a church plant.
- 2. What will you do in your group? (If you are looking for good material to guide you, see the following bibliography.)
- 3. (For church leaders:) If you have a good small group ministry, encourage men and women to subdivide into smaller, same-gender groups from the small group. Some groups will alternate—same-gender groups meet every even week and the mixed group meets every odd week.
- 4. Practically, I've noticed that men often love to meet for discipleship groups in the Transparent Context early in the morning before work. Women often prefer a night gathering, especially if child care is an issue.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE TRANSPARENT CONTEXT

- Cobble, Tara-Leigh. *Mile Deep: A Practical Guide to Discipleship Groups*. Shrinking Music Publishing, 2014.
- Cole, Neil. Cultivating a Life for God: Multiplying Disciples through Life Transformation Groups. Signal Hill, CA: CMA Resources, 2014.
- Gallaty, Robby, and Randall Collins. *Growing Up: How to Be a Disciple Who Makes Disciples*. Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2013.
- Harrington, Bobby. *Foundations: The Storyline of the Real Jesus*. disciple ship.org.
- McNaughton, Daniel, and Bryan Koch. Follow: Learning to Follow Jesus. Spring City, PA: Morning Joy Media, 2010.
- Pope, Randy. *Insourcing: Bringing Discipleship back to the Local Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013.
- Buehring, David. *The Jesus Blueprint: Rediscovering His Original Plan for Changing the World.* Oviedo, FL: Higher Life Publishing, 2012.

Chapter Thirteen

THE EMPOWERING PRESENCE

Discipleship in the Divine Context

GETTING STARTED

- 1. Develop a strong daily devotional habit and regular spiritual disciplines. Do an audit of your habits by recording them for a month and then sharing the results with a mature Christian friend, asking for their observations, encouragements, and suggestions for growth.
- 2. Take those you lead with you on spiritual retreats, and invite them to join you in specific seasons of fasting and prayer.
- 3. (For church leaders:) Create teaching series on these themes. Maybe provide journals to encourage the deeper spiritual life (for instance, as a church encourage everyone to journal through Lent).
- 4. Raise the bar: ask those you lead to be regularly accountable for their spiritual lives.
- 5. Fast and pray earnestly and regularly for revival in the church.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE DIVINE CONTEXT

- Benner, David G. *Desiring God's Will: Aligning Our Hearts with the Heart of God*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005.
- Foster, Richard J. *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, 3rd ed. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. *The Way of the Heart*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.
- Ortberg, John. *The Life You've Always Wanted: Spiritual Disciplines for Ordinary People*, expanded ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.
- Willard, Dallas. The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1990.

"ONE ANOTHER" COMMANDS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

IN A WONDERFUL short essay, Jeffrey Kranz comments on the "one another" commands in the New Testament. He notes that these two words in English actually translate a single word in the original Greek, hence our made-up word "oneanothering" is entirely biblical! Kranz notes several key themes that emerge from the one hundred New Testament occurances of this word:

Unity: approximately 33 percent

- 1. Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
- 2. Don't grumble about one another (John 6:43)
- 3. Be of the same mind with one another (Romans 12:16, 15:5)
- 4. Accept one another (Romans 15:7)
- 5. Wait for one another before beginning the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:33)
- 6. Don't bite or devour one another (Galatians 5:15)
- 7. Don't provoke or envy one another (Galatians 5:26)
- 8. Gently, patiently bear with one another (Ephesians 4:2)
- 9. Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32)
- 10. Bear with and forgive one another (Colossians 3:13)
- 11. Strive to do good for one another, and don't repay wrong for wrong (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

- 12. Don't slander one another (James 4:11, 5:9)
- 13. Do confess sins to one another (James 5:16)

Love: again, approximately 33 percent

- Love one another (John 13:34, 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8;
 Thessalonians 3:12, 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 4:7, 11;
 John 5)
- 2. Humbly serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13)
- 3. Bear with one another in love (Ephesians 4:2)
- 4. Greet one another with a kiss of love (1 Peter 5:14)
- 5. Be devoted to one another in love (Romans 12:10)

Humility: around 15 percent

- 1. Honor one another above yourself (Romans 12:10)
- 2. Value one another as more important than yourself (Philippians 2:3)
- 3. Serve one another humbly in love (Galatians 5:13)
- 4. Wash one another's feet (John 13:14)
- 5. Don't be proud, but associate with one another regardless of social position (Romans 12:16)
- 6. Submit to one another, especially in household relationships (Ephesians 5:21)
- 7. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5)

The remainder:

- 1. Do not judge one another, and don't put a stumbling block in the way of a brother or sister (Romans 14:13)
- 2. Greet one another with a holy kiss (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12)

- 3. Husbands and wives shouldn't deprive one another of sexual relations (1 Corinthians 7:5)
- 4. Carry one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2)
- 5. Speak truthfully to one another (Ephesians 4:25)
- 6. Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9)
- 7. Encourage one another concerning the resurrection (1 Thessalonians 4:18)
- 8. Encourage and build up one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11)
- 9. Spur one another on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)
- 10. Pray for one another for healing (James 5:16)
- 11. Offer hospitality to one another (1 Peter 4:9)

APEST AND APOSTLES TODAY

THE EXISTENCE AND ROLE of the apostolic function in the post–New Testament church has been a matter of some debate down through the centuries! Our understanding is that we do have apostolic leaders who operate in a role similar to that of the original apostles, except none are foundational to the church, nor were they alive with the incarnate Christ. Paul writes about apostolic leaders in Ephesians 4:11–13: "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his 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."

Writing to the church, Paul designates five major functionary roles in the church: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd ("pastor" in the NIV), and teacher, which gives us the acronym APEST. Those with the calling of apostle are shaped to be a blessing to their church through their pioneering, embracing of change, and ability to bring breakthrough in stuck situations.

How do we know that Paul was addressing those beyond the Twelve in this passage? The context of Ephesians points toward that understanding. In his well-known commentary, Markus Barth says that Paul's description of the church in Ephesians is different from descriptions in any other New Testament book, leading him to describe this section of Ephesians as "the Constitution of the Church."

Not only does the church receive more prominence in Ephesians, but the church is not as localized—in terms of houses and district churches— as in other letters. Unlike Paul's usage of "church" in the letters of Galatians, 1 Corinthians, and Philippians, his usage in Ephesians describes the universal church. He never mentions any names or specific issues in Ephesians. As a result, many scholars believe it was a circular letter, intended for the region, not just for the city of Ephesus.

This is important for our discussion, because it means Paul's description of the five APEST functions in Ephesians was not limited to one time period or region. His letter is about the church in general. So when the goal of the apostle is to build up the body of Christ, this role applies to the universal church.

Furthermore, other passages in the New Testament describe individuals with the apostolic gifting other than the original Twelve. The Greek word for "apostle" (apostolos) is used eighty times in the New Testament. While most of these occurrences refer to the Twelve, three individuals are clearly designated by the word apostle: Barnabas in Acts 14:14, Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:25 (translated "messenger" in the NIV), and Jesus in Hebrews 3:1. These are important passages, for they point to apostles as people sent beyond the local church—people sent to take the gospel to new regions, to expand the kingdom of God beyond the local church.

What does an apostolic leader do in the church today? Alan Hirsch writes about apostolic leadership in *The Forgotten Ways*, commenting about the nature of this kind of apostle and the mission of God: "I can find no situation where the church has significantly extended the mission of God, let alone where the church has achieved rapid metabolic growth, where apostolic leadership cannot be found in some form or another. In fact, the more significant the mission impact, the easier it is to discern this mode of leadership."

The church needs this type of "rapid metabolic growth" in America, as we have shown, and apostolic leadership is integral in achieving it. Alan Hirsch and Tim Catchim define the apostolic leader's primary role: "The apostle is tasked with the overall vigor, as well as extension of Christianity as a whole, primarily through direct mission and church planting. As the name itself suggests, it is the quintessentially missional ministry, as 'sentness' (Latin: mission) is written into it (*apostello* = sent one)."

With regard to the Social Context, we have found it enormously helpful to recognize the different strengths that each of the five APEST functions bring to missional community life and leadership.

Appendix Three

EXAMPLES OF MISSIONAL COMMUNITY PATTERNS

THIS APPENDIX ILLUSTRATES through individual examples how unique mission contexts create different expressions of Up, In, and Out.

1. FAMILIES WITH ELEMENTARY KIDS

Realize that a missional community made up of families with young children will feature a high level of noise, activity, and mess! Rather than trying to be King Canute commanding the tide to reverse direction, allow the mild chaos to be a source of creativity and fun.

Up—Unusual forms of worship will be embraced with enthusiasm, so you can try out all sorts of things that adults by themselves might find beneath their dignity! Movement is important and helpful, and in turn will make those moments of quiet and stillness all the more impacting. Then as you engage with the Bible (probably one with lots of interesting pictures), make sure that the children are able to truly share their insights—yes, some will be a bit silly, but others will be unwittingly profound.

In—Food will need to be of the mass-produced, easy-to-clean-up variety! This doesn't mean it can't be healthy, but probably this is not the occasion to fight that particular battle. The meal table provides a great opportunity for adults and children to mingle, especially as the conversation shifts to stories about school, families, and life, and learning from Jesus in those situations. In the best groups, children see the adults demonstrate that what they share is taken seriously and valued.

Out—While your primary focus is on reaching and drawing in other

families with elementary-aged children, as a group you can find opportunities to serve in the wider world as a context for discipleship. For instance, consider adopting a needy family at Christmastime, organizing a work morning to clean up the grounds of the local elementary school, or collecting money for a good cause. Children are superb witnesses for Jesus, so as a group you can train each other in some evangelism skills as well as join in prayer for friends, neighbors, and family members.

2. A RESIDENTIAL HOME FOR THE ELDERLY

Often residential homes will be open to a group that wants to be a regular part of their community, since the danger of institutionalization is always present. One of the best things you can do is bring a new level of energy, love, and interest to life there. Don't forget to bring the kids—many older folks love having babies and children around and reminiscing about their own children's milestones.

Up—Hammering out some classic old hymns is a great approach, since most older people have at least a basic knowledge of some aspects of church culture. Likewise, using the King James Version of the Bible might well be a good move, especially for well-known verses and passages. When it comes to discussion, recognize that people might be reluctant to speak up—whether due to aging voices or to a generational desire to be courteous and not disagree with what has been shared.

In—While many older people have special dietary needs and will want to eat the regular meals served at the home, you can try planning some events that hark back to old times, such as a summer tea party featuring home-baked goods that resonate with their childhood experiences. In terms of building closeness, prayer requests can be shared around the tables and brought to the Lord in a brief time of prayer. Later if you are able to visit people in their rooms, you can pray together again, especially for sickness or more private concerns.

Out—While the vision is to impact every resident in that home, you can invite those who live there to join you in serving those outside of that place without leaving it! For instance, knitting baby wear for the local crisis pregnancy center, recording some of their stories from the past to be

played in school social studies classes, or writing letters of encouragement to those incarcerated in a local juvenile correction facility. If possible, try to pick a place where other Christians are already serving so that what the folks in the residential home do adds to that ongoing witness. And for residents who are committed to Christ and willing to grow as intercessors, help collect specific prayer requests from all sorts of people, contexts, and ministry situations.

3. MEN'S GROUP

Often men will gather around a specific event or activity but will find it difficult to share personal information. The Social Context is an ideal size for men because they can chat and connect over a common task, and when they are ready they can share more openly and form a few deeper relationships.

Up—Invite guys to pause and be thankful for what they have. Encourage them to move beyond the obvious (family, money, health) and think more about their identities and destinies. Show how the Bible gives practical guidance and advice for living well, such as how to conduct themselves wisely in the workplace, how to be a good husband or father, or how to become a leader of integrity in their community.

In—Food is rarely a mistake here! No doubt pancakes and bacon or pizza and breadsticks will be a hit, but also consider creating a more memorable experience sometimes. Is anyone a genuine grill master, or can someone teach how to cook a great curry, or would anyone be willing to lead a wine tasting? When men are having fun and gaining new knowledge, all sorts of interesting relationships can take shape. When it's time to process life, encourage the men to form prayer trios as subsets of the bigger group.

Out—In middle age, the big challenge for men (especially in the middle class) is moving from a life of success to a life of significance. Helping them think through this shift is vital, as is finding a few key projects that you as a group can do that will make a difference. Whether it's as simple as doing repairs and yard work at the home of a struggling single mom, or tutoring kids who need help with schoolwork, or perhaps

planning a bigger event where other men from workplaces and neighborhoods can be invited in, taking on a practical challenge together often has a way of bringing men closer together.

IN SUMMARY

Remember: these examples are intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive! You will be able to think up better versions of these ideas and adapt these examples to your own place of mission. Nevertheless, the point is that we are to incarnate our faith into the specific contexts where God has placed us. By learning to love and understand the people we are reaching, we can better help them follow Jesus in more areas of their lives.