

MINISTERING TO DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN YOUR SMALL GROUP

I. GOD'S HEART FOR THE BROKEN & DIFFICULT

A. Texts:

1. Matthew 9:10-13
2. Romans 5:8

B. Consider Jesus' dysfunctional Small Group

1. Peter
2. James & John
3. Thomas
4. Judas

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE (Eph. 4:15)

A. Speak the Truth

1. Truth and Love must flow together
2. Truthfulness = Integrity
3. The example of Jesus and the rich young ruler (cf., Mark 10:17-22)

B. In Love

1. Without love even if what you've said is "true," it is not the Truth of Jesus!
(cf., 1 Cor. 13:1:1-3; Rev. 2:1-7)
2. *"By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another"*
- John 13:35

III. THE “EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED” PERSON (EGR)

- A. In the course of our ministry, we will have people coming to us who are in substantial need. Many of whom have been deeply hurt and wounded by either their own sins or the sins of others. These types of individuals are known as **extra grace required** people.
- B. We need to keep our hearts pure toward chronic problem people.
- C. It is important that we seek to discern what the root of their problem is rather than focusing only on the visible symptom (cf., Jesus and the paralytic, Mark 2:1ff).

IV. RECOGNIZING EXTRA GRACE REQUIRED (EGR) PEOPLE

- A. Super-Spiritual Sam - Symptoms: all events and occurrences carry a meaning beyond the obvious. There is an obsession with the deeper message. Often a paralysis or inertia which leads to stagnation in real life. They can get irritated with others (carnal Christians) don't share their enthusiasm. They have an attitude of superiority.
- B. The Disciple of "Whomever" - Symptoms: This disciple is "stuck". He can't forget the way it used to be done, has difficulty trying something new and gauges all current events by the standards of a historic ideal.
- C. The Self-Ordained Minister - Symptoms: He will assume authority without asking. One day you will wonder, "When did I lose control of this group?" This one may have difficulty allowing other to lead and will feel hurt and rejected when you assert authority.
- D. Professionally Needy People - Symptoms: You will feel drained and eventually abused by those who seem like "black holes" emotionally. If you limit ministry time or attention, they will feel rejected.
- E. The Story Teller - Symptoms: Will not recognize that they are dominating the group's time. Stories will usually be about themselves or self-aggrandizing. Will feel hurt and rejected when limits are set.
- F. The Demanding Child - Symptoms: Will not take "no" for an answer. Difficult for them to delay or postpone their request or need. Strong supporters as long as the leader meets their needs.
- G. The Charter Member Syndrome - Symptoms: Threatened by growth or new people. Comfort zone collapses when the environment changes. Will resist change. Keeps a close circle of friends, may ignore or shun seekers.

- H. The Give, Give, Give, but Never Receive Syndrome - Symptoms: Always seems willing to pray for someone else. Hesitates or even resists being ministered to. May stem from false humility, misunderstanding of real body life, or feelings of unworthiness.
- I. Mr. or Mrs. Know-it-all - Symptoms: They believe they have something significant to say about everything, and they say it. Often they can be argumentative, or can raise irrelevant aspects of any given subject. May stem from pride, insecurities, or need to prove oneself.
- J. Low-cut Lucy - Symptoms: Attends meetings clothed (or lacking sufficient clothing) in such a way that draws attention to themselves, as well as potentially providing a stumbling block to others.
- K. Bad Breath Bob - Symptoms: This person lacks effective personal hygiene. Their consistent body odor or bad breath becomes a reality members of the group begin to dread and avoid.

V. **FOR DISCUSSION:**

- A. What kinds of issues would need to be dealt with during the meeting, compared to issues that should be dealt with outside the context of the meeting in private?
- B. How do you stop or redirect un-edifying or disruptive input?

VI. **MINISTRY TECHNIQUES FOR THE SMALL GROUP**

- A. Don't be afraid to redirect un-edifying conversations or trends.
- B. Ignore (if possible) disruptive behavior
- C. Reinforce edifying input and behavior
- D. Assure the EGR person that they are loved, but that their issue can be better addressed privately.
- E. Realize that there may be a point when making a referral to a professional counselor or another group (a relevant Focus Group for example) is the healthiest thing to do.
- F. Pray like crazy!