

Clarifying the Win in Community Groups

Once a year, every year, the Lombardi trophy is awarded to the NFL team that wins football's biggest game: The Super Bowl. The event is a big deal to say the least. So much so, that CBS was looking to get 2.6 million dollars for a 30 second commercial spot in 2007. If my math is correct, that's *over* \$80,000 dollars per second...per second! Many companies are willing to lay out that kind of cash because they know people will be tuning in. They tune in to see who wins the game. It's easy to find out who the winner is in football, just look to see which team has the higher score at the end of the game. Simple.

Have you ever thought about what it means for a Community Group to win? In other words, what is the definition of success for a Community Group? What does it look like for a group to "put the ball in the net?" Okay, enough with the clichés. Without knowing what a win is, a group experience can get frustrating for the leader and its members. What started as a good idea, over time, can become purposeless, routine, and boring. Answering the questions, "Why do we exist?" and "What is my purpose as a Community Group leader?" are vitally important to the health of a Community Group. Reggie Joyner says, "When you clarify the win, it is like marking a specific destination on a map – it's easy to know when you win because you arrive at your desired destination." Clarity regarding the "win" gives a group a real sense of purpose, although by no means does it imply that every group will look exactly the same—every group has a unique fingerprint.

It's imperative that every Community Group has a destination mark on the map. Take a minute to think through the following two questions:

How do you, and your group members, know when you have succeeded as a Community Group?
What is a one sentence definition of your role/purpose as a Community Group leader?

Here's the deal. Answering those questions could go a couple of ways. First, you could get frustrated, because you may not know. Second, there is a real possibility that we could all come up with something, but chances are the answers wouldn't look the same. In other words, there wouldn't be a common purpose.

The reality is that the answers to these questions already exist, and by the time you're finished reading, you'll know them. Here's what I want you to know. We are not "reinventing the wheel." We want to take what's already there, and show you how they fit in the structure of CG's in a clear and relevant way.

LifePoint has a Vision Statement and a Mission Statement. I want to show you how these fit together in the context of CG's.

Mission Statement

Influencing people to find and follow Jesus.

This, in essence, is the Great Commission...the command of Jesus to make disciples who can make disciples.

*18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and **make disciples** of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

How do we accomplish that, how do we make it happen? That leads to our vision statement.

Vision Statement

To build a family of believers who bring pleasure to God as we love Him completely, love each other unselfishly, and reach out with Christ's love to the world.

This Vision Statement is a reflection of the Great Commandment found in Mark 12:

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these. Mark 12:29-31

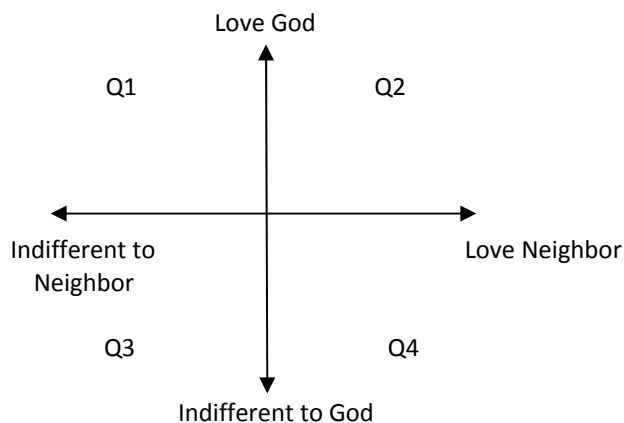
There are 3 relationships represented here:

1. God
2. Believing Neighbors
3. Unbelieving Neighbors

It's been my belief that you do the "Great Commission" in a "Great Commandment" kind of way. We will never influence people to find and follow Jesus in Community Groups unless our love for God is increasing and our love for people (believers and unbelievers) is growing.

In his book, "The Connecting Church" Randy Frazee says this about the Great Commandment: "The sixty-six books of the Bible can be daunting and difficult for any person to get his or her arms around. It contains the beautiful story of God's plan to reconnect us to himself; it speaks clearly about the purpose of the church—to develop followers of Christ. However, the profile of a fully developing follower of Christ doesn't appear so simply defined within its pages, given the size and genre of the Bible. Even in Jesus' day, with the only reference being the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament, the people asked him to summarize the writings of Scripture. [In the Great Commandment] Jesus tells us that the first and foremost law of life is to love God. Flowing out of and motivated by our love for God is love for others. There is a vertical dimension to our life (that is, loving God) and a horizontal dimension to our life (that is, loving our neighbor)."

Frazee goes on to illustrate those components with this quadrant graph:



"The objective of the Christian life is to reside in Quadrant 2, which entails that a person must both love God and love others. It is important to note that the thrust of the spiritual life in Christ is not to pursue or own individual happiness and fulfillment. Rather, we give ourselves to the pursuit of loving God and helping others. As a matter of fact, Jesus assumed that self-love comes rather naturally when he said we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. If we struggle with a lack of self-love and self-worth, the solution is not to focus all of our attention on loving

ourselves. Instead, as we pursue the love of God and then turn and pour the substance of the love of God contained within us onto others, it brings meaning, significance, and contentment to our life.”¹

It’s from our Vision Statement that we define the role of a Community Group leader and clarify what the wins are for a Community Group.

Role of a Community Group Leader

The one line definition for the role of a Community Group leader is this:

The role of a Community Group leader is to lead their group to grow in the faith through a Deepening walk with God, Developing Biblical community with one another, and Deploying their gifts to serve the world and the Church.

3 Wins of a Community Group

The “wins” for a Community Group flow out of our Vision Statement and are laid out in that definition.

There are 3 things that we would like all Community Groups to commit to. They give Community Groups a common purpose, although how groups work these out may look different.

Here are the 3 wins, the areas by which to measure success:

- 1. Spiritual Growth**
- 2. Caring for One Another**
- 3. Serving the World and the Church**

If we are succeeding in these 3 areas, we will influence people to find and follow Jesus. As Community Groups commit to these three practices we will have a common purpose and have marked the destination on the map.

The Differences between Ground Rules and a Covenant

In times past, we didn’t have real clarity between “Ground Rules” and “Covenants.” Ground Rules are what we all agree to “play by” within the context of a Community Group. They serve as an agreement to how we interact with one another and set general guidelines for the group, as well as expectations. They are extremely important, and many ailments that groups face can be traced back to misunderstood, poorly communicated, or unenforced Ground Rules. For instance, if there is no agreement among group members that they will be faithful to the group, don’t be surprised if people don’t prioritize their calendar around the group. Ground Rules should be clearly articulated, agreed upon, and revisited. Attached to this document are the Ground Rules that we expect all Community Groups to adopt. These represent the irreducible minimum that groups at LifePoint should agree upon.

If the Ground Rules are the “rules” we agree to play by, then the Group Covenant is the “playbook.” The Group Covenant is what the group wants to accomplish in order to fulfill the greater mission of influencing people to find and follow Jesus. Our goal is for every Community Group at LifePoint Church to have a common purpose. A common covenant helps to make that happen. An important note needs to be made here. The Group Covenant,

¹ Randy Frazee, *The Connecting Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan 2001) 70-73

attached to this document as well, is a framework that must be built upon. Each group should decide together as to how this will look for their group. The outworking of the covenant may even change over time. But, the three commitments remain the same. Again, the three commitments are: Committing to Spiritual Growth, Committing to Caring for One Another, and Committing to Serving the World and the Church. They are embedded in the definition of the role of a Community Group leader: *The role of a Community Group leader is to lead their group to grow in the faith through a Deepening walk with God, Developing Biblical community with one another, and Deploying their gifts to serve the world and the Church.*

Every time a Community Group succeeds in one of these three areas, they win.

How Do the 7 Essentials Fit Into This?

You may be wondering how the Essentials of Community Group leadership fit into these three wins. The 7 Essentials help you to effectively lead the kind of group that succeeds in these three areas. You know them, right?

1. Lead Yourself
2. Invite and Include
3. Promote Participation
4. Facilitate Care
5. Cultivate Relationships
6. Focus on Life Change
7. Multiply Leaders and Groups

Our goal is to keep things straightforward and clear. For instance, all three relationships found in the Great Commandment are represented in the LifePoint acrostic which is covered in the essential "Focus on Life Change."

Imagine

Just imagine hundreds, even thousands, of people all pointed in the same direction and headed toward a common goal. The impact that will have upon our communities, our families, the world, and yes ourselves, is incredible. Jesus knew that. It's why He commanded His disciples to make disciple-makers in the context of a loving relationship with Himself and people. A commitment to a common purpose is a vital step toward Community Groups continuing to be places of extreme transformation.

Community Group Ground Rules

- **Attendance:** Group meetings and starting times will be given priority; if you are unable to attend or running late, please call.
- **Participation:** Each person is encouraged to give input. We encourage everyone to share and no one to dominate the conversation. Members will assist in making the group a successful experience.
- **Confidentiality:** In order to promote a loving environment and build trusting relationships, whatever is shared in confidence, let's keep it here.
- **Authenticity:** Members should feel free to be themselves. A Community Group environment should encourage openness and transparency.
- **Respect:** Group members should never say anything that would embarrass their spouse or members of the group.
- **Encourage Growth:** Each member will promote the others' spiritual growth by encouraging next steps in their spiritual journey.
- **Multiplication:** Members will seek to invite and include new members and develop new leaders so that the group can give life to new groups.

Group Details

This group will meet on _____ night.

This group will begin at _____ and end at _____.

The host home for the group will be _____.



Group Member Contact Information:

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Group Leader Contact Information:

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Apprentice Leader Contact Information:

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

Name: _____ Tel: _____ Email: _____

