

Small Group and Discipleship Group Primer

Small Group and Discipleship Group Vision:

“Small groups and discipleship groups are to be an intentionally intrusive, Christ centered, and grace-driven redemptive community”

The vision of small groups and discipleship groups was developed in conjunction with the Young Adult ministry of Harvest Bible Chapel York Region. The wording was originally from HBCYR and maintained for the UWCCF. The term “intrusive” has garnered much attention with some people noting that it has elicited a certain amount of discomfort. The reason why we talk about being vulnerable is because in order to grow we need to be prodded

The reason why we talk so much about vulnerability and transparency is because in order for there to be meaningful growth and challenging in our faith, we must be people that are intrusive about certain matters - especially when dealing with sin. The context of the term intrusive is also of paramount importance. Many times people are intrusive with malicious or hostile intentions, but we as Christians are meant to be intrusive and to talk about the real and deeper issues of our lives in the context of a grace-driven *redemptive* community.

From this vision statement there are also five separate facets to our Small Groups and Discipleship Groups:

1. Christ-centered:

“Whom have I in heaven but you? The earth has nothing I desire beside you. Though my heart and my strength may fail me, the Lord is my strength and my portion forever.” - Psalm 73:25

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ...” - Philippians 3:7-8

2. To be Relentless Prayer Warriors:

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will

guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." - Philippians 4:6-7

"Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" - Ephesians 6:18

3. To Know and Serve Each Other with a Christ-Exalting Persistency:

"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." - Hebrews 3:12-13

"So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us." - 1 Thessalonians 2:8

4. Not to be Masters of the Book but to be Mastered by the Book:

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." - John 15:7

"How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word." - Psalm 119:9

5. Gospel Propagators:

"For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with words of eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. " - 1 Corinthians 1:17

Note: worship is not mentioned explicitly in this list because Worship is implicit and the foundation of all these items.

Model of Discipleship:

We believe that while we have a responsibility and desire to raise up people who are good discipleship group leaders, our ultimate desire is to see people who are discipled biblically. We adopted the MAWL model of discipleship starting in the Spring of 2017. It was first introduced by a missionary from China. The idea behind MAWL is primarily a way of thinking about how to lead a DG and ultimately disciple people. It is a set of guiding principles for how to lead. It is an acronym for: Modeling, Assisting, Watching, Leaving.

- + Modeling: This is the primary task for any disciple of Christ which is to model a personal faithfulness to Jesus. This does not mean someone who is perfect or has any significant "advantage" over another Christian, but it is the mark of a believer who in both good and

bad times shows faithfulness. This is to say, suppose one struggles with sin, then show a faithful struggle against it. Be a model of what a faithful and biblical fight against sin looks like. Or alternatively, show what being a faithful student means. We are to model to others an example of faithfulness to Jesus.

- + **Assisting:** This is what is usually thought of when we think of discipleship: our helping of other brothers and sisters to also walk faithfully with the Lord. We primarily walk with those around us, encouraging them, and growing together so that we may be found faithful.
- + **Watching:** While there is no prescribed period of time for the "assisting" phase, since our DGs are limited by term, the "assisting" period is usually 4 months. After this point, as you split off from your group you begin to watch your DG members from afar (or at least, not within the same context of DG). You check up with them once in a while, see how they are doing, and support them as needed. But from this point off you are quite hands off.
- + **Leaving:** At a certain point in time, the discipling process ends between two people. Deciding when to leave is often hard, but after a certain time, leaving is part of the process. This can be after many years or even decades.

DGs will primarily incorporate the modeling and assisting aspect of MAWL.