

LIFE Group Leader Handout

September 9, 2018

Prevailing in Prayer

Pastor Mike O'Connor

Scripture--Exodus 17:8-16

8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim. 9 So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand." 10 So Joshua did as Moses told him, and fought with Amalek, while Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill. 11 Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. 12 But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. 13 And Joshua overwhelmed Amalek and his people with the sword.

14 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven." 15 And Moses built an altar and called the name of it, The Lord Is My Banner, 16 saying, "A hand upon the throne of the Lord!"

Main Idea--Fight Life's Battles God's Way

The Enemy--Amalek

[Amalek] attacked you on the way when you were faint and weary, and cut off your tail, those who were lagging behind you, and he did not fear God. (Deuteronomy 25:18)

The Plan of Moses--send Joshua to fight on the earth, Moses wages war in the heavenlies.

The Results of the Plan

- ❖ Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.
- ❖ A Written Testimony
- ❖ Moses built an altar called: The Lord is my Banner

Five Spiritual Lessons for You and Me

- We are opposed
- The battle has two dimensions
- God uses teams to accomplish His goals
- God gets the glory
- Raise the Staff of God over Those You Love & Lead

Jesus intercedes for us--*Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25*

Application--

- What truth was new or refreshed in this message?
- What persons and what situations are you consistently raising your staff of authoritative prayer over?
- How has the truth that Jesus Himself is raising His banner over you changed your outlook regarding some of the "Amaleks" in your life?

From Suzie: Some of you have more established groups than others, but I think the following article is helpful for us all. Praying for you all and for a God-glorifying start to the LIFE group year!

First Night Survival Guide: Preparing For And Leading Your First Meeting.

By Will Johnston

Here are a few tips to make your first group meeting go smoothly—a survival guide, if you will. Failing to plan is planning to fail. So consider these six things while preparing for your first meeting.

Communication

Be sure to remind everyone when and where the group is meeting and give them your phone number in case someone gets lost. On that note, be sure your phone is turned on and the ringer is turned up before the group starts. You don't want anyone to miss the meeting because they couldn't get in touch with you at the last minute!

Food

Nothing creates conversation like cuisine. I don't know if you've ever noticed, but strangers sitting around a table full of food are much more relaxed and talkative. I recommend the three Cs: chips, cookies, and caffeine. In other words: something salty, something sweet, and something good to drink.

Environment

Create a welcoming environment. People are less likely to stick around if they're uncomfortable. Make sure you have enough chairs. Turn on the lights. Burn a candle to get rid of that funky odor. Put a fresh hand towel in the bathroom.

Prayer

Prayer is the easiest thing to overlook during the frantic preparation process, but it's also one of the most vital. This isn't just a social gathering or a team meeting. Your goal as a small-group leader is not only to create community but also to make disciples, to help people become more like Jesus. And if you're going to do that well, you'll need his help to do it. In the days leading up to the first meeting, pray for your group. Pray that God would send the right people and that those who come would connect well and find community. Pray for wisdom and discernment for yourself as the group leader. Above all, pray that God would be glorified through your group.

Community

I'd argue that discipleship should be the top priority for your small group. However, it's not your top priority for the first meeting. Instead, your main goal is for people to get to know each other. You don't need to cover material or help people grow spiritually or any of that. Just make sure people actually connect with one another. That's what will bring them back and open the door for discipleship. Here are a few tips to help make that happen:

Set aside time for conversation. Consider not having any other agenda for the first meeting. Greet everyone personally. As the small-group leader, do your best to meet everyone at the door when they first come in, especially if they don't know others in the group. Help group members connect with each other. Use an icebreaker question like "Tell us a story about your best friend from childhood." It may seem silly, but it helps spark conversation, and the right questions can really help a group get to know one another.

Vision

While your first priority is building community, you have a very important second priority for the night: casting vision for the group. The people who are part of your group want to know what you'll be doing together.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Why are we meeting?
- What do we hope to accomplish?
- Are we a group that requires consistent attendance or is it okay if people pop in and out?
- Do we have a group covenant?
- Are members expected to attend service projects?

Remember that it's much easier to set these expectations at the beginning than it is to change the culture of the group later on. And if a problem does need to be addressed in the future, it's helpful if the expectations were communicated up front.