

Is Having an Apprentice Leader Necessary?

(Apprentice Leadership at Cherry Hills Community Church)

Apprentice Leadership

At Cherry Hills we operate on a community model and we realize that creating authentic, transformative, Christ-like communities takes time. This is why we do not split groups intentionally, nor do we work with the “empty chair” philosophy that you might find in churches that operate by a true Cell Group growth model. Our focus is on communities moving forward in conforming to the likeness of Christ by developing authentic relationships and community that provide the best environment for growth possible. We realize that there is no schedule for this kind of growth and so we encourage completely open-ended groups. With that said, is there room for the Apprentice leader concept?

We believe the answer to this question is yes.

Shared Leadership

We have found that it is extremely helpful for leaders in groups to find or develop other leaders within their groups. This serves a number of different needs and functions:

1. It frees up leaders.
2. It provides better support and a better system of care for the group members.
3. If the leaders are unable to attend, there is always a back up leader to still meet that week and not miss valuable time together as a group.
4. Responsibilities can be shared among a larger number of people.
5. It provides greater effectiveness and better focus on more areas of care that a group may need.

Within a small group, developed leaders can help leaders in the task and teaching at hand, which makes for more effective, intentional and sustainable groups. Not to mention that the small group environment is a great vehicle for training up future leaders in other communities and ministries with the church. One of the benchmarks of great leaders is their ability to replicate great leadership in others.

Future Small Group Leaders

We encourage groups to develop Christ-centered communities over a long period of time. At the same time, we also realize that the best place to find effective small group leaders is from the population of people who have had experience in good small group communities. We have also seen that people who have good small group experiences tend, at some point, to feel the call to start their own small groups and replicate their experience with others who have not had that kind of community before. Stated simply, God calls people out of communities to create new communities around them. In some cases we have seen those prospective leaders remain in their previous small groups while starting other groups and continuing the replication process on their own. We encourage this. In other cases leaders leave their previous communities, when that season is over, to begin anew with others. Training up effective leaders will leave a wonderful legacy for generations of small groups down the road.