

# THE CELL GROUP LEADER



## THE FULL GOSPEL CHURCH OF GOD

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## INTRODUCTION

Nowadays there is much talk about cell groups, small groups, house churches, Bible study groups, koinonia groups, care groups etc. These, however, are all different names for a common concept. At the completion of this course you should be motivated to become the leader of such a group. Irrespective of where we start it is imperative that you should have a clear idea of what we are dealing with.

## WHY CELL GROUPS?

God is busy adding members to His church and it is OUR responsibility to care for them. The great command of Jesus must be obeyed. We are to make disciples and teach them according to Mat 28:19. We are dealing with spiritual babies who need constant care otherwise they will die. Cell groups constitute a God-given method of fulfilling the needs of our people.

Through cell groups the church has rediscovered the Biblical method of caring spiritually for modern man. This is exactly the method used by the early church. The "church in the home" is a Biblical concept. (Act 1:13; 2:46; 5:42; 12:12; Rom 16:15; 1Cor 16:19; Phlm 1:2)

## OBJECTIVES OF CELL GROUPS / HOUSE CHURCHES

1. To enable members to get to know the Lord Jesus better and to share Him with others.
2. Getting to know each other as a spiritual family and caring for one another.
3. It is a vital way of personal fellowship and creates the opportunity to share, pray with and minister to one another; this develops the skill of ministering to an individual in an informal atmosphere.
4. Every house church aims at leading at least two families to Christ per year.
5. The main objective is to equip believers for their service in the body of Christ (Eph 4:12), and to win people for Christ. (If the Bible starts talking to you, you will never ever be the same again.) The group should try to bring unsaved people to Jesus.
6. It must always be remembered that cell group meetings with open Bible discussions are not intended as a substitute for Sunday services where one person delivers a sermon and all attendees listen. In the groups needs of individuals are met in a way which might not be possible in the larger Sunday assembly.

## THE REASON FOR THE “GROWTH” IN THE CONGREGATION OF EPHEBUS

A close study of Acts 18 and 19 reveals that the congregation really started expanding after they had made a study of the Word of God (Act 19:9, 20). It seems as if the special services conducted by Paul in Ephesus did not avail much, even though this continued for three months. When Paul, however, took the disciples aside and taught them the Word of God for two years, the Word spread throughout Asia. The final objective of the cell group is that everyone in the vicinity of the group should hear the Word of God. The old saying seems to be true: If the people do not come to church, then take the church to the people.

### LET US LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED IN ACTS 19:1-20

1. Paul comes across a small community of about 12 men who have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit. (Act 19:1,2)

If you want your congregation to grow you have to make sure that the members are full of the Holy Spirit. Who convicts of sin? Who leads in the full truth? Who is the Comforter? The answer is: THE HOLY SPIRIT! Many congregations are unable to grow, because they do not allow the Holy Spirit to work in His fullness in their midst. May God pour out His Spirit on every member and every pastoral couple.

2. The second reason why the congregation grew was that they studied the Word of God (Act 19:9-10).

One thing is quite clear: God only confirms His Word. **Act 4:4** *But many of those who heard the Word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.* **Act 6:7** *And the Word of God was increasing. And the number of the disciples in Jerusalem was multiplying exceedingly ..... (MKJV)*

Read: Mark 16:20

3. A third reason for the substantial growth in Ephesus was that the people started striving after holiness in their own lives. The believers confessed their sin and broke with it (Act 19:18-20). A congregation is unable to grow if the members live in sin. (Verse 18, TLB): *Many of the believers who have been practising black magic confessed their deeds.....*

### WHAT THE LORD IS DOING IN KOREA

Everyone who has read the books or has seen DVD's of Dr Yonggi Cho about church growth will be aware of the following:

1. He started his first congregation way back in 1961. Four years later his congregation had grown to 600 members. He then handed the congregation to one of his fellow pastors.

2. In 1965 he started a second congregation and once again, four years later, he placed it in the hands of yet another fellow pastor. By then the congregation had 18 000 members!
3. In 1969 he started with his third congregation and by October 1980 it had 130 000 members with 7 000 cell groups with 6 700 female leaders and 300 male leaders.
4. In September 1981 there were 200 000 active members and 13 000 cell groups.

At that stage they administered water baptism to about 10 000 new members per month. When a cell had 10 families, it had to split and the cell leader's assistant became leader of the second cell.

In March 1983 they had 18 000 cell groups with 5 to 10 families in each!! In the beginning of 1986 the congregation had 500 000 members and 34 000 cell groups. Each cell was supposed to win one family for Christ every 6 months.

People reason that it is possible for Korea with its large population of Buddhists and idol-worshippers to show such amazing church growth, but do not see the same possibility for South Africa.

## HOW DO WE GO ABOUT STARTING CELL GROUPS?

1. **Pray God to show the correct leaders:**

The pastor must contact them personally and appoint them as God directs. They must then be dedicated to the Lord during a Sunday service. These leaders should be men and women who are true witnesses for Christ, full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

All the leaders must meet regularly - at least once a month but preferably each Monday evening for about 1 hour. During this meeting God's revelation to the congregation is shared with the leaders. Any leader should therefore have confidence to share with the group a revelation which God gave him or her. The pastor decides which of this particular information God wants to impart to the congregation. This guarantees unity within the congregation.

2. **How do we go about starting a cell group?**

The leader personally invites members as well as interested people to come together for Bible study at a pre-agreed venue. As a rule only tea and coffee will be served during the meeting – no eats.

The leader and other members of the group must contact any people who may lose interest and start staying away and lovingly encourage them to re-join the group.

## WHAT EVERY LEADER SHOULD KNOW

1. **AS LEADER YOU HAVE PEOPLE TO CARE FOR.** They are entirely your responsibility, because you are the shepherd of the flock (1Pet 5:1-2). You must meet the needs of your people (physical, psychological, social and spiritual). You can only achieve this by being an example to them.
2. **YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY WITH YOUR PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE A GOAL.** This goal is that your people will grow spiritually and will win others for Jesus. Our aim is two families a year per group. Discuss ways and means of achieving this goal with your group.
3. **THE FORMAT OF YOUR GROUP MEETING IS IMPORTANT.** It shouldn't be another church service nor a social club. It is a meeting of the household of the Lord. The things of the Lord should be discussed and the burdens of others should be borne. The members should study the Word of God together. It should be a real "koinonia" group, kept alive by limiting the meeting time to a maximum of 90 minutes.
4. **SUBMIT A BI-MONTHLY REPORT TO YOUR PASTOR ABOUT YOUR GROUP.** The following matters should be addressed:
  - How many attend the meetings
  - Any problems you experienced
  - Your future planning
  - A summary of the proceedings of your meetings
5. You must set aside sufficient time to prepare for every meeting and regularly pray for every member. Visit them from time to time and try to make contact with prospective members.

## WHICH STUDY MATERIAL IS BEING USED?

1. The pastor decides what the subject will be.
2. All study material must be in writing and discussed with all leaders beforehand. Every leader should add his "personal spiritual flavour" during the presentation.
3. The leaders decide in advance how many presentations per subject will be made. This will ensure that the different groups deal with the same material at the same time.

**NOTE:** Study material is available in the PASTOR'S MANUAL.

## HOW THE LEADER SHOULD APPROACH BIBLE STUDY

It is suggested that the leader should have a good reference Bible as well as at least one other translation of the Bible, e.g. NKJV, NASB, ASV, NIV, NEB etc. This will help the leader to get a good understanding of key concepts.

In addition you may consult commentaries or read books on the subject, but the Bible should remain the principle source of information.

Your study should go hand-in-hand with fervent prayer. The Holy Spirit is able to explain everything to you so that you will understand what the Lord wants to say to you (1John 2:27); after all, the Bible was originally written for simple people with very little education.

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If you meditate on the portion of Scripture in this way, you will be prepared and equipped to lead your group so that the Word will mean the same to them as it means to you.

### WHEN MUST CELL GROUPS MEET?

It is essential that the group meets regularly on a weekly basis.

You may ask, "What happens to the regular prayer meeting of the congregation?"

The answer is that you have your group meeting on the same evening. Make it a "prayer cell" where people come together to do intercession; then we pray instead of having just another church service.

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### WHAT HAPPENS AT A CELL GROUP MEETING?

1. The leader must see to it that everyone feels at home and new members must be properly introduced. They should also be made to feel that they belong. The atmosphere should be totally informal – arrange chairs in a circle. The leader must make every meeting as interesting as possible.
2. They sing and worship the Lord together; God wants us to be true worshippers (John 4:23-24).
3. This is followed by Bible study for a minimum of 30 minutes. (Remember that the entire meeting should not last more than 90 minutes.)
4. The whole group should participate in the Bible study. Ask different members to read certain texts aloud. (Don't embarrass poor readers) Encourage members to take part in the discussion and share what they have received from the Lord (1Cor 14:26).
5. The leader should at all times exercise strong leadership with regard to the subject. He should not permit unnecessary questions. He should, however, not dominate the discussion as it may cause some people to withdraw instead of participate.
6. He should encourage everyone to always bring along their Bibles and notebooks.
7. It is important for the group members to discover that they are one large spiritual family, therefore they should show interest in the other group members throughout the week. This is especially true if anyone should go through a trying time. They should be quite informal and address everyone by name, instead of by title. The leader should spend time with every individual member through personal conversation.

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- 8. The meeting draws to a close with a time for prayer. It may happen that the Lord directs the members to minister to one another in prayer, as there may be those who need forgiveness or are ill etc. and consequently are really in need of intercessory prayer. It may even happen that within the group the Lord may baptize someone with the Holy Spirit.
- 9. Thereafter there is informal conversation time which will help the group to get to know one another better.

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### EVALUATION

From time to time it will be necessary for the leader to evaluate not only his group, but also himself. This is best done by asking the following questions:

- 1. Do I qualify according to 1Thessalonians 2:7?
- 2. Am I available and sufficiently sensitive to meet the needs - social, spiritual, physical, etc. – of my group members?
- 3. Do I regularly pray by name for each member of my group?
- 4. Do my group members make spiritual progress?
- 5. Have I succeeded in my outreach objective in reaching new prospective group members? (If yes, to what extent?)
- 6. Do I set a good example to the group by constantly reaching out to the unsaved?

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By honestly answering these questions you will determine whether you are making progress and are moving in the right direction.

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### THE GROWTH OF THE CELL GROUP

A cell group can start off with only 3 members but when it reaches 12, it should split. The leader should earmark a prospective assistant, who would be able to lead the new group that will meet in another home. The pastor may be contacted for provision of new assistant leaders. As growth is the expected objective of the group it essential to plan ahead to enable that growth to materialize - no group should ever be allowed to stagnate.

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Little Falls have very good manuals for the training of Cell Group Leaders. Properly trained Cell Group leaders are essential for success and growth.

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