

Weekend message Small group study

- complementing the sermon given at St. Paul on **8/15/15 – 8/16/15.**
- a meeting agenda organized per St. Paul core values
- estimated for a 90-minute meeting



WEEK ONE STUDY ABLAZE FOR THE HARVEST

Equipping “the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”—Eph. 4:12

Below is a tool to help delegate the leading/facilitating of meeting components between different small group members.

	Prayer (p.4)	Outreach (p.3)	Word of God (p.1)	Equipping (p. 4)	Worship - Our Redemption Response - (p.1)
Study component leader					

Prayer leader – Leads group prayer time

Outreach leader – Leads the charge of outreach (serving, inviting, filling the empty chair, etc.)

Word of God leader – Leads the Bible study time, encourages application of God’s Word to life

Equipping Leader – Coordinates and reminds who will lead the different meeting components.

Worship (Our Redemption Response) Leader – Leads worship time during meeting.

Helping people find God is a lot like gardening. There are often many steps involved in the journey. Evangelism is not an event; it's a process. Today, we're going to take a look at this journey of the heart and practical "gardening" steps you can take to assist someone God has placed in your life.

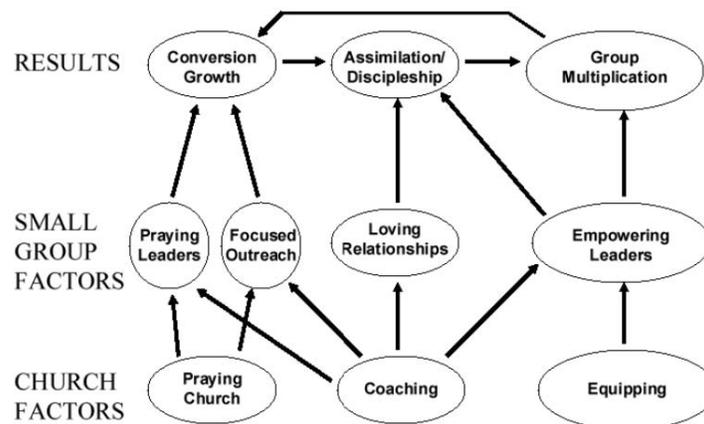
3. **Read Mark 4:1-9.** What connections do you find between helping people find God and the "fertile ground" mentioned in Jesus' parable?

4. Read the following article:

Dwight Marable and Jim Egli have done extensive statistical research involving thousands of small groups in dozens of countries. This research has revealed the dynamics that make small groups grow: measured in terms of conversion growth, the assimilation of new members and the launching of new small groups.

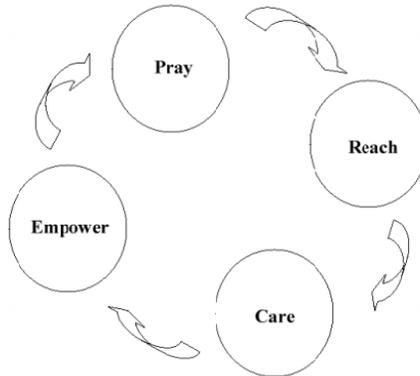
Interestingly, small group growth is not impacted by such factors as the age of the leaders, their educational level, their gender, marital status, their personality or their spiritual gifting. In other words, it doesn't appear to matter if groups are led by teens or senior citizens, high school drop-outs or Ph.D's, men or women, marrieds or singles, introverts or extroverts, those with the gift of teaching or evangelism or service. These factors make little if any difference.

However, consider the path analysis chart for a moment. Many of the research findings can be boiled down to this single diagram. Arrows simply indicate "influence." So it can be said that the research indicates that a "praying church" influences "praying leaders" and "focused outreach." In other words, if a church emphasizes prayer, that will influence leaders to pray and groups to be intentional about their outreach efforts. In addition, "praying leaders" influence conversion growth.



The findings of the research yielded a number of fascinating insights. In particular, it was discovered that groups attracted non-believers 1) if the leaders (and group members) take time with God in prayer; 2) if the group members are experiencing loving relationships with one another; 3) if the groups have a clear outward focus on the unchurched; and 4) if the groups are empowering others by recognizing their potential and actively involving them in leadership.

These small group health factors are referred to as the Core Four of Pray, Reach, Care and Empower.



5. Take the Assessment (found at <http://www.stpaulaurora.org/blog---small-groups/start-new-to-reach-new-4-week-series>)

While taking this assessment, think of *whatever* kind of church small group with which you have association. This could be your small group Bible study, your ministry team, or even the group of friends you get together with socially.

Tally your results. No need to share numbers with folks!

Excerpt from Groups Ablaze/LC-MS Ablaze Living: Ablaze for the Harvest .

Outreach

15 minutes

In groups of threes or fours, discuss the following questions:

- What surprised you about the results?
- In what specific ways does the assessment personally challenge you?
- What is one specific step you can take in the next month to grow or stretch yourself related to the assessment?

Excerpt from Groups Ablaze/LC-MS Ablaze Living: Ablaze for the Harvest .

Prayer

20 minutes

Share a prayer request based on what was discussed during this meeting's *Word of God* and/or *Outreach* time. What is that next step in your faith life God is calling you to make? What convicted you from God's Word and/or our discussion of His Word? Please also share a way in which the group may support/encourage you regarding what you've shared. Of course other important matters can be prayed about as well. After all have shared, pray for the person on your left (whether aloud or silently). Pray together in popcorn style (as opposed to going in order around a circle.)

Equipping *for coordinating next week's meeting...*

5 minutes

	Prayer	Outreach	Word of God	Equipping	Worship - Our Redemption Response
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