



Effective Group Leadership

Transitions & Goodbyes

We all want to be good leaders for our groups. And I have amazing news for you—Just the fact that you care about that at all means that you are a good leader already! Did you hear that? Really let it soak in—**you are a good leader already!**

Now, all you need are some tools to help you be a *strategic* leader—one who knows what to anticipate with your group and how to respond in a way that helps the group grow, develop, and accomplish its goals.

There are five main stages of group development:

1. Forming
2. Storming
3. Norming
4. Performing
5. Adjourning

In the Adjourning stage (which is the focus of this document), a group is preparing for a transition or for the end of the group.

- At Grace Community Church, this most often comes up when a group has fostered and equipped new leader(s) and is now splitting to form two groups
- At this stage, the group is finishing up and members are saying goodbye to one another
 - This is an important stage, even if the goodbye is not final (e.g., the members will reconvene in the fall)
 - This is a chance to honor and recognize what **this particular group** and/or **this specific study** meant to each member
- Strategic leadership at this stage includes:
 - Modeling how to say goodbye, including sharing what impact the group had on you personally and what you got out of the group
 - Providing time for members to reflect on their experience and what lessons they will take from it moving forward
 - (*If applicable*) Helping the group form a discipleship-based plan for moving on and establishing new group(s)
- This can be very difficult for some groups who have developed strong camaraderie and do not want to be broken up
 - There are times for groups to continue with one another, and times when they need to branch out
 - Biblical models of discipleship show us that there comes a time for groups to disband and have the members form new groups, thereby creating opportunities for bringing up new people into spiritual maturity
 - It is key for you to consult with other group leaders, the Connection Coordinator, and potentially pastoral staff to determine when it is time for your group members to launch out into new discipleship opportunities

What Adjourning Looks Like

- Taking time to recognize and appreciate the role the group played in your life
 - This helps members recognize their own growth and experience, including potentially recognizing if they didn't grow much – and then thinking about why that might be.
 - Sometimes changes end up being unexpected – a group member may find out over the summer they have to move away, or work schedules may change and they can't attend group anymore.
 - This gives an opportunity to avoid later regrets about not being able to tell the group what it meant to you
- Giving space to respond to the group ending
 - This opens up opportunity for people to express any feelings about the ending, if they have them
 - This is especially important if your group is not going to be continuing on, or if you are birthing a new group
 - That process is more likely to be successful if you have given the group a chance to say goodbye to the old group first
- Solidifying final “take away” information and next action steps
 - Our groups are a primary vehicle for discipleship at Grace Community Church, and as such they are meant to encourage deep understanding of Scripture and personal response to it.
 - Incorporating this in to your final group meeting offers opportunity to talk about what next step God is calling you to, and creates a sense of accountability to accomplish it – people are much more likely to meet a goal they have told others about than one they have kept private
- Setting expectations about what comes next and responding to questions
 - It is important for you group members to have some sense of what comes next, so that they do not feel cast adrift
 - Sometimes, this means being upfront about not knowing exactly what things will look like next and communicating a timeline for when more information will be available, if possible