

# LEADING AN EQUIP GROUP

## MINISTRY DESCRIPTION, EXPECTATIONS, AND HELPFUL TIPS

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### OVERVIEW

EQUIP is designed to “equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). In other words, the purpose of EQUIP is to make disciples who make disciples that are anchored in all that God is for them, in Jesus. This development track is designed to help this happen in the context of small, covenanted, gender-specific groups. EQUIP groups meet regularly for discussion of pre-selected content, scripture, prayer, and sharpening. EQUIP is not intended to be a class, but a context for life-on-life missional discipleship. That means the fruitfulness of these groups will largely be dependent on your leadership of the group. Therefore, this appendix describes what that entails as you prayerfully enter into leading.

### QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERS

Although we recognize that we are all works in progress, we know that disciples will in many ways mirror their leaders. Therefore, for better or worse, the condition of the heart of a leader is foundational to the fruitfulness of each group. That being the case, the following are the basic qualifications for an EQUIP leader:

- Member of DCC in good standing (Ephesians 2:19-22)
- Sacrificially giving of time, treasure, and talent (Romans 12:1-2)
- Regular participant in our corporate gatherings and involved in a Cornerstone Community (Hebrews 10:24)
- Practicing ongoing commerce with the gospel and regular time with Jesus in the scriptures (Colossians 3:16)
- Pursuing holiness and walking in the light with other brothers and sisters (1 John 1:5-10)



## RESPONSIBILITIES

We recognize that most of our EQUIP leaders will already be involved in other areas of ministry. Therefore, our goal isn't to add more to your already full plate. Rather, our hope is to bring some additional structure to something you're likely already involved in - a Discipleship Group. As a leader, we are asking you to set a culture of grace, growth, and accountability through the following:

- Creating a weekly meeting rhythm (i.e. when and where will you meet).
- Ensuring your group has purchased the next book well in advance.
- Reading assigned reading (roughly 25-60 minutes of reading per week) and reviewing discussion questions (provided) prior to meeting.
- Facilitating weekly group meetings through prayer, scripture, discussion questions, and life-on-life accountability.
- Ensuring everyone understands the current assignment and helping your group work through any issues.
- Reviewing weekly homework (short reflection papers) and following-up as necessary.

An EQUIP Leaders group is available for you to join on The City and is the primary avenue of coaching, training, and ongoing support.

## READING AND WORKLOAD

The EQUIP reading list has been specifically chosen to help you, and those you lead, experience real transformation in your heart (motives/affections), head (understanding), and hands (action). Topics include: How to read a book, Gospel identity, Gospel productivity, understanding the Bible, prayer, belonging to a local church, apologetics, fighting sin, and more. We are intentionally making the reading accessible for all levels.

At a minimum, we ask that you keep up with the weekly reading and do your best to complete as many project/reflection assignments as possible. Although you are not required to do the projects each week, you will find them personally helpful and life-giving. Completing assignments will also allow you to better lead as you call others to follow you. We estimate the following weekly time commitment to be as follows:

- Reading ( avg 25 pages/week): 1 hr/wk
- Discussion question review and preparation: 30 minutes/wk

- Weekly EQUIP group meeting: 1.5 hr/wk
- Admin, review projects, feedback, etc: 30 minutes/wk

As the year progresses and your group matures, our hope is that other members of your EQUIP group will be able to facilitate the group meetings. This will not only lighten your load, but give them real hands-on experience in leading. We expect many of these participants to become leaders the following year.

## FORMAT

- **Gender specific.** In order to provide the best life-on-life discipleship and accountability, men and women will participate in gender-specific groups. No mixed groups please.
- **Covenanted.** For continuity and the overall health of each group, participants will covenant to be fully engaged and regularly participate (see covenant on page 37). EQUIP is not something that was designed for participants to jump in and out of. Although inevitably there will always be circumstances that may prevent someone from participating (illness, family death, scheduled vacation, etc.), every member should be committed to being present and completing the reading and homework each week, and miss no more than 4 meetings out of the year.
- **Small.** Since EQUIP is a life-on-life discipleship track, groups should be no more than 4-6 people (including the leader).
- **Invite Only.** Although some EQUIP groups will be formed out of existing Discipleship Groups, each EQUIP leader will invite 3-5 others to join them providing they can commit to the covenant.
- **Time bound.** The EQUIP Year will run about 52 weeks. Each group determines its own schedule.
- **Content.** This Field Guide describes assigned reading, personal projects, and discussion questions.
- **Beyond group.** Our hope is that the relationships formed in your EQUIP group would extend beyond your weekly meeting into every day life and mission.



## HELPFUL TIPS AND GUIDELINES

### Meeting Time and Location

- **Plan to meet for no less than one hour each week.** Depending on the size of your EQUIP group, you may find you need closer to an hour and a half or two hours. This will ensure you have adequate time to check-in, pray, discuss, and review projects and homework together, as well as just enjoy each other.
- **Meeting impact on other priorities.** If you are planning on meeting during the week, we recommend trying to schedule your meeting for an early morning before work. This keeps evenings open to engage with non-believers, your community, your church, or your family, rather than taking up another evening that might pull you away from other priorities. Additionally we find that groups can meet more consistently and regularly when they meet in an early morning time block.
- **Think about where you will meet.** Although your group is free to meet wherever you like, thoughtfully consider the location where you will gather. While regularly meeting in a local cafe or bar can be helpful for missional purposes (getting to know baristas, etc.), meeting in a home can be less distracting and more conducive to prayer and sensitive topics. Feel free to experiment to discover what works best for your group.

### Meeting Structure

- Although you are free to structure your EQUIP meetings however you'd like, the following is a helpful guide for your time. Don't be constrained by the order listed - feel free to adjust based on the time you have, the week, content, and season of your group:
  - 6:30am-6:45am - Check-in/accountability
  - 6:45am-7:00am - Review homework/projects
  - 7:00am-7:45am - Read scripture, discussion questions
  - 7:45am-8:00am - Prayer, wrap-up (next week's reading, order books)
- You may find that the Holy Spirit leads your EQUIP group to some unplanned discussion, and that's ok. However, it's best to plan out the flow of your meetings so you make sure you're getting to the content and there's consistency from week to week. If your group is never starting on time and you're always running out of time, talk about it as a group and

either reset expectations or find another meeting time.

- As much as possible, keep the scriptures central to your studies and discussion. We want our times, and lives, rooted in and shaped by the Word.

### **Reviewing Homework**

Each week a project or assignment is given to help the group process and solidify the content. Most assignments should be completed and turned into you before the next meeting. We recommend blocking out a small chunk of time to review assignments prior to your next meeting. Discuss with your group when you would like to have assignments turned in by (eg. by 8pm the night before).

### **Asking Good Questions**

Although we've tried to make each week as enriching as possible, being a leader is more than just asking discussion questions. It is also being attentive to what the Spirit of God is doing in your own heart and in the hearts of those in your group. As you unpack the scripture and reading each week, you may find that you need to spend some extra time drilling down in a particular area with others in the group. Here's a few examples of some good heart level questions:

- What are you desiring more than anything else?
- What do you find yourself day dreaming about?
- What lies are you subtly believing that undermine the truth of the gospel?
- Where have you made much of yourself and little of God?
- Is technology stealing attention from your family?
- Is work replacing your spouse's place in your heart?
- What fears are paralyzing your heart from enjoying God?

### **Model Being a Disciple**

Although you might be "leading" a group this year, don't forget you are a member of the group as well. This means that often you will need to invite other group members into your life and remind them that your



heart is no different than theirs. Encourage them to ask questions of you to reveal sin and encourage you in your life as well.

### **Model Making Disciples**

As you walk through EQUIP and other potential leaders emerge, invite them to walk with you in what it looks like to prepare for and lead your times together. Have them facilitate your discussion, and solicit feedback of your leadership and offer feedback of theirs. The goal is that after this year is over, many in your group would be equipped to lead EQUIP groups of their own.

### **What EQUIP meetings should not be:**

- NOT a place for endless introspection and navel-gazing.
- NOT a legalistic or religious way to impress God and others.
- NOT a venue to for you or others to display your vast biblical knowledge.
- NOT a group to help others while withholding from them.
- NOT merely a Bible study where you share your insights.
- NOT a time to just chat and catch up.

It's our hope and prayer that you'll see participating in the EQUIP year as a massive privilege as you learn more about the depths of the Gospel and experience the joy of intentionally pouring your life into others for their good and God's glory!