

V. MULTIPLICATION

“As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” – John 20:21

Frontline exists to multiply gospel communities. Multiplication is the aim of Jesus’ disciples. Authentic, healthy Followers are growing and increasing in size, ability, and impact. Our goal isn’t simply to increase in numbers, but to cultivate our capacity to provide effective and healthy ministry and mission. Through multiplication, we are able to better make disciples, care for people and advance the Kingdom. In order to do this well, we must be intentional about multiplying our selves, other leaders and new groups. A healthy, thriving, biblical Community Group is consistently making disciples who make disciples, who multiply into more groups, hubs and even potential new church plants.

PRACTICAL REASONS FOR MULTIPLYING GOSPEL COMMUNITIES

We Multiply for Discipleship

When disciples are making disciples, they grow. When Community Groups increase in number beyond a healthy threshold, participation and growth begins to waver. Healthy human relationships are limited. We can’t know everyone. Leaders can’t be everywhere with everyone. Conversations can center around the most vocal in the group. Mission shrinks, and discipleship is stifled. We multiply so discipleship may thrive.

We Multiply for Care

Community Groups are responsible for 80% of care at Frontline; therefore, it’s crucial to be sensitive to group size. When groups grow too large, people can fall through the cracks, and needs go unknown and unmet. The ability to care for one another becomes restricted. Keeping groups to a healthy size helps provide the ability to know and care for every member. We multiply so care can thrive.

We Multiply for Mission

Jesus commissioned us to go. Groups should be reaching out in order to welcome in. When we are on mission, our groups will be growing. When a group is too large, visitors can feel overwhelmed and neglected and even go unnoticed. We multiply so that mission thrives and more people come to know and love Jesus.

A Note on Group Dynamics

Remember, the purpose of Community is to experience Christ Jesus ministering to us in a way that changes lives. As leaders, your goal is to help create an environment where this goal can be accomplished, so we want to avoid things that would hinder this. For this reason, the size of our groups matter and must be taken into account. The ideal size of a Community Group is 12-15 adults. The ideal size for Discipleship groups is 3-5. For the purpose of discipleship, care, and mission it is very important that we strive toward maintaining these size dynamics.

Where there are lots of young children in a group, the number of adults should decrease appropriately. 3-4 families with multiple young kids is a lot to handle for any leader, let alone other members. There will from time to time be exceptions, but overly large groups are not our desire and are not usually the best environment for effective discipleship, care, and mission.

When a group is too small it might turn inward and be less effective at mission. If too large, a group will not be able to know and be known as they should. The larger the group, the harder it is for a leader to shepherd well. When together, it is more difficult for everyone to be heard; as we scatter it becomes harder to remain organized and accountable.

Learning from Jesus, we see that he had twelve primary disciples; his “Community Group”, if you will. Additionally he had three who were closer; his “Dis-

cipliship Group”. With these principles, we are simply striving to live what Christ exemplified.

If your group is currently larger, this is a good starting place for a conversation on multiplication and apprenticeship, and should be the objective of the group sooner than later.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Visit the Resource Library:

<http://resources.frontlinechurch.com/multiplying-gospel-communities/>

METHODS OF MULTIPLICATION

How and when you go about multiplying is something that you should pray about and consider based on your group dynamic. There are several factors to consider; group size, momentum, and calendar are a few.

There will always be obstacles to multiplication. Timing, comfort, and convenience can seem against it. Members will even resist and want to push back. It's important during these times to walk through the process together, continually casting vision and pointing back to the gospel through the process. If you're having trouble figuring out what it looks like for your group, talk to your Hub Leader. They are there to help you with the process.

FOUR COMMON METHODS TO MULTIPLICATION

Multiplying Directly

The first means of multiplication is the direct approach. From the beginning, leaders should be talking about multiplication. When there is healthy growth and leadership it's time to multiply. Discussing and planning this together will help build unity and momentum, but a direct approach will lean more on current leaders, apprentices and Hub leaders. Having prayed and planned, it's time to get specific with the group. Announcing leadership, location and time-frame and then giving a short time for members of the group to pray and

decide which group they will be committing to for health and mission.

Multiplying Indirectly

A second means of multiplication is an indirect approach. A conversation is had with an apprentice, or a person leading within the group. They may be asked who they feel drawn to or have an affinity towards. This potential new group leader is encouraged to pray and begin talking with those people about multiplication. Together with the current leader they pray, plan and prepare to multiply. The apprentice will fill out a Community Group leader assessment and send it to their Hub leader to be evaluated on their leadership readiness.

Multiplying Organically

As the leader of the group, take note of sub-groups that form naturally. Ask the Lord to highlight who the leaders in those sub-groups are and approach them about forming new groups.

Multiplying Geographically

Where do you live? Where do you see a need for greater gospel presence in your area? Philosophically, we want our communities to be connected geographically, grouping disciples together where they live, work and play as much as possible. This method helps to fulfill our goals of community and mission. As a group grows, you may begin to see multiple people coming from similar areas. It's good to then begin helping them envision new groups in their areas of town and helping facilitate conversations about planting into their neighborhoods.

GOSPEL GOODBYES IN MULTIPLICATION

One of the costs of multiplication to consider is the pain and difficulty of saying gospel goodbyes. Jesus reminds us that. The pain of multiplication is often experienced often produces more life.

And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. John 12:23-26

There are a few things to consider when we experience gospel goodbyes.

We acknowledge the pain:

God has not called us to live life as stoics. The sense of loss should not only be acknowledged but also, in a real sense, celebrated! The loss tells us a beautiful story of having enjoyed something good and real. It is to be celebrated akin to the life of a new born celebrated in spite of the labor pain that is present.

We feel the pain:

It will be very difficult to celebrate multiplication unless we feel and experience the pain of gospel goodbyes. As Pastor Steve Timmis puts it, ‘We should never be able to simply shrug our shoulders,

walk away from friendships and move into the next phase of life. The sadness could not be dissolved by a click of the finger, nor assuaged by a good sleep and a cup of tea! The sense of loss over a good thing is a truly good thing. Which is why we needed to embrace it and feel it, not spurn it and short-circuit it.

We celebrate a Gospel win:

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 28 about our call to go into all the world and make disciples, this requires us to ‘go’. Every time a group multiplies there is joy amidst the pain of growth, there is celebration knowing that this means there is space created for more disciples to be made and more people to meet Jesus and for more people to be cared for. There is no one in our lives constantly except for our Lord Jesus Christ by the power and presence of His Spirit, we trust in Him as we say our Gospel goodbyes with great hope and great joy in the furtherance of the Gospel.