



# MERCY HILL CHURCH

## MERCY HILL COMMUNITY GROUP APPRENTICE/LEADER RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Belief**

We believe that discipleship happens in community. At Mercy Hill Church we put this conviction into practice by placing a major emphasis on Community Groups. In terms of spiritual formation, what happens during the week is often more important than the weekend for the people of Mercy Hill Church.

At Mercy Hill Church we are a church **OF** Community Groups, not a church **WITH** Community Groups. What we mean is that Community Groups are not an add-on to what we do at Mercy Hill. Community Groups are essential to who we are as a church.

### **What are the competencies of a Community Group leader?**

The importance of leadership in Community Group ministry cannot be overstated. It can be tough to define what makes a group leader but at Mercy Hill we have compiled a list of 5 key competencies that make a good group leader. Those competencies are listed below:

#### **Competency #1**

##### ***Faithfully Teach the Word of God***

If a Mercy Hill Community Group always has Biblical teaching as a part of the weekly meeting, then having a strong Biblical teacher is absolutely essential. Mercy Hill Community Group leaders should seek to know and articulate the word of God as clearly and passionately as they can.

#### **Competency #2**

##### ***Create a Hospitable Environment (both physically and relationally)***

Environment is a big deal. We are always assessing our environment whether we recognize it or not. For Community Groups, it is important that the environment of the group meeting location and the relational environment (set by the group's leadership) be inviting and comfortable.

### **Competency #3**

#### ***Facilitate Engaging Discussion***

Group discussion can really bring further clarity to what has been taught from Scripture. Mercy Hill Community Group leaders should not only be able to lead discussion, they should be able to do so in a way that draws others in to participate and internalize what is being discussed.

### **Competency #4**

#### ***Identify and Develop Emerging Leaders***

The church requires that leaders raise up other leaders who will raise up other leaders. Without this mindset, the church would not and cannot exist. It should be the focus of every group leader to not only identify leaders but to help them develop further in their leadership ability.

### **Competency #5**

#### ***Mobilize Group Members to Serve Others***

Every believer has the call to serve others. Jesus modeled service to us by giving His life, we in turn should serve others. In so doing we not only model our Savior but point others to Him.

### **What does a Community Group leader do?**

Below are the expectations of a Mercy Hill Community Group leader. As for an apprentice leader, they will work under an existing Community Group leader to develop the skills to lead a group in the areas listed below. As time goes on it is expected that the apprentice leader will take more leadership in the group in terms of teaching, leading, gathering with people in the group, etc.

### **Fellowship**

- First and foremost, the Community Group is exactly that, a community. We hope that by providing structured environments organic relationships will happen. These relationships will mutually edify all who are involved as we live out our commitment to each other as a true faith family.
  - o Structured environments produce organic relationships. The Community Group leader has a responsibility to create environments outside of the structured time in order to see relationships happenings (dinners, trips, events, etc.). Furthermore, the Community Group

leader has a responsibility in the group to welcome new people, encourage people who are hurting and struggling, and be the relational glue for the group.

## **Pray**

- Even over teaching we want our Community Groups to be filled with prayer. This is where we intercede for each other, Greensboro, our nation, and the world. Prayer guides will be provided the majority of the time.
  - The Community Group leader is responsible for creating such an environment in Community Group. Sometimes this will happen at the end of group, sometimes groups will break into smaller groups to pray, etc. The point is Community Groups are to be places where people are prayed for.

## **Teach**

- Each gathering will have some time devoted to a teaching point/discussion from the previous or upcoming sermon. This will be a chance to further engrain some truth already exposed by the sermon. By discussing, we are also giving our congregation the chance to personally work out what they are learning. Discussion guides will be provided the majority of the time.
- Also, teaching/discussion times should be regularly filled with testimonies from your group's members. These can be true salvation type testimonies or more mission oriented.
  - The group leader is responsible to facilitate the teaching and discussion time. The leader should be a continuous learner always trying to hone their skills in teaching the Bible. Ask your Community Group coach for a document we created on the different ways to teach through the Community Group guide.

## **Serve**

- Our congregation will have the best chance to serve the local community through their Community Group. Each Community Group is encouraged to meaningfully partner with one local community mission (example: pregnancy services, a local school, tutoring and mentoring resources, etc).
  - The group leader is free to consider ways their group can be involved and engage the community in terms of service. The best way to practice this is through Mercy Hill *Serve* opportunities that occur throughout the year.

- *Serve Week* occurs 4 times per year. During the *Serve* opportunities, Group Leaders lead by communicating, facilitating, and ensuring involvement of their respective group.

## Plant

- Each Community Group will have a burden to see other groups planted. We will not, however, multiply through division. Our strategy in group planting will closely resemble that of our church planting strategy. Each Community Group leader should have an apprentice they are preparing to be a capable Community Group leader. When this person/couple is ready, they will most likely be paired with a small core from their existing group to begin a new work.
  - Group leaders are always to be on the lookout for potential apprentice leaders. Once these leaders are identified the Community Group leader needs to approach this person about becoming an apprentice. From there they must be assessed, trained, and eventually sent out.

## Shepherd

- The elders of Mercy Hill Church are responsible to shepherd the flock. The bible calls elders to feed, care, protect, watch over, and lead the church. This responsibility is taken very seriously at Mercy Hill Church. So seriously that Community Group leaders are, in effect, trained to serve as under shepherds. Since it is impossible for so few elders to be deeply involved in the lives of so many people within the church, under shepherding is the way we effectively pastor and lead the church.
- Practically, under shepherding look as follows:
  - Mercy Hill Church elders are connected respectively with each Community Group Leader.
    - Each Community Group Leader meets with their respective elder on a monthly basis and are disciplined by that elder.
  - Community Group Leaders are on the front lines.
    - For example:
      - Group Leaders are there to speak the truth of the gospel in particular situations.
        - If confronted with a counseling situation that they feel unequipped to handle the Community Group

Leader can simply pass it up to their coach (or elder) and the Elder can handle it from that point on.

- Group Leaders should visit the hospital when a group member is sick.
- Group Leaders should coordinate meal arrangement services.

### **Time Structure for Community Group**

- Community Group structure can vary but should typically follow these general guidelines...
  - o 15 minute welcome/refreshment time
  - o 25 minute teaching/discussion time
  - o 35 minute prayer/accountability time
  - o 15 minute closing fellowship/refreshment time

### **Leader Accountability**

- Each Community Group leader will be a member in good standing with Mercy Hill Church
- Each Community Group leader will have a direct relationship with an elder of Mercy Hill Church
  - o This relationship will have its basis in coaching and encouragement but is also the primary means for Elders to shepherd the flock. When issues of church discipline, absence, major life change, or celebration occur in the life of church members, they should be passed from the Community Group leader to the elders promptly.

### **Commitment**

- Besides the basic skills it takes to lead a Community Group, one of the most important things for Community Group leaders is consistency. Below is an outline of the time commitment required for leading a Community Group.
  - o Weekly Community Group meeting.
  - o Monthly coaching meeting with your Community Group coach.
  - o Quarterly All Leader Gatherings (will typically be on Monday nights).
  - o Yearly Community Group retreat (will always be 1<sup>st</sup> weekend in November).

### **STEPS TO GOING FROM AN APPRENTICE TO COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER**

## **APPRENTICE LEADER QUALIFICATIONS**

- 1) Recommendation from a Community Group leader.
  - This is a Community Group leader recommending someone as a possible apprentice to their Community Group coach.
- 2) Read Community Group leader overview document and complete apprentice application.
  - Accessible through the Apprentice Leader Resource Page:
    - <https://mercyhillchurch.com/cgleaderapprentice/>
- 3) Confirmation of spouse.
- 4) Meeting with a Community Group coach.

## **APPRENTICE LEADER TO GROUP LEADER PROCESS ACTION PLAN**

- Apprentice with a Community Group for 3-6 months.
  - Over these 3-6 months the apprentice should take on increased responsibility in the duties and responsibilities of a Community Group leader.
    - Teaching and leading the group through the discussion guide.
    - Lead the prayer time in group.
    - Take on responsibility of initiating community and fellowship in the group.
    - These should gradually take place based on the comfort level of the apprentice leader and their skill level in leading.
- Attend monthly Community Group coaching meetings and quarterly all- leader meetings.
- Read, or if applicable listen, to the following resources that are available through the Apprentice Leader Resource page:
  - Listen to Pastor Andrew's "Abide" sermon series.
  - "Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands" by Paul David Tripp
  - "Sticky Church" by Larry Osbourne
- Become a co-leader in the group you are in with the intention of eventually planting a new Community Group out of that group.