



KEEPING THE FOCUS ON CHRIST: LEADING AMID DIVERSE OPINIONS

Leadership Group Guide - September 2024

Leadership Thought:

In today's heated political climate, it is common to encounter people who think differently from us. As leaders, it's essential to build bridges that transcend these differences, foster unity and love within our small groups, and keep the focus on the Kingdom of God. Jesus demonstrated this by calling diverse people to be part of His group of disciples. He broke down cultural and social barriers and unified them as children of God. Amid all of the political corruption and social injustice of His day, Jesus focused on calling people to repent, have faith in God, and obey the Word. Our goal as leaders is to create environments where this can happen in our small groups by keeping the focus on Jesus and His Word rather than our differences and opinions.

The Importance of Keeping the Focus on Christ:

Hebrews 12:1-2: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us **throw off everything that hinders** and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, **fixing our eyes** on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith."*

If we are not careful, we can allow our disagreements to become the focus rather than God and His Word. Therefore, leaders must manage disagreements in the group and bring the focus back to Christ, His Word, and His mission.

How to keep your small group focused on Christ:

- 1. Keep the small group meeting focused on the weekend sermon and the discussion guide:**
 - Remember, the purpose of the small group meeting is to process life in the context of the weekend sermon and to apply lessons learned. The discussion guide is designed for this reason.
 - Don't allow people to "hijack" the meeting or take the discussion on unnecessary tangents or "bunny trails" (i.e. politics).
 - Bring the focus back to the Word and the discussion guide. *"That's an interesting thought. Since it's off-topic, we can talk about it after the group. Let's get back to the guide."*



2. Keep the focus on the Word and our response to it:

- The Bible repeatedly challenges our sinful nature and calls us to repent. Often, we deflect away from ourselves by focusing on external matters like issues in the world or the sins of others.
- Leaders must redirect people's focus to their sins, encouraging repentance, faith, and obedience.
- Ask, *"What does God's Word say about this?" "In light of the gospel, how does the Word say **you** should respond?"*

3. Redirect people to live Christ's mission for His Church:

- Jesus was clear that His mission for the Church was not to overthrow the corrupt Roman or Jewish governments but to make disciples.
- Our job as leaders is to lead people into obeying Christ's Great Commission mandate to preach the gospel and make disciples.

Mark 16:15: *"He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."*

Matthew 28:18-20: *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- Consider and ask, *"How does your opinion further the mission of Christ's Church, the Great Commission?" "What are you personally doing to preach the Gospel and make disciples?"*

4. Redirect people towards prayer and trust in God:

- The Bible is clear that we are to pray for our leaders and seek God's will and intervention.

1 Timothy 2:1-2: *"I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness."*

- Furthermore, Scripture reminds us that God ultimately sets our political leaders in place and that we must vote responsibly and trust in Him no matter the outcome.

"Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels



against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted.” (Romans 13:1-2 NLT)

These practices and perspectives help us lead through disagreements, focusing on Christ and His mission to seek and save the lost.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What stands out to you most from the points above? How can any of the above thoughts be applied to your leadership? Explain.
- How have you navigated diverse opinions or tensions between group members in the past? What did you do? What did you learn from those experiences? What can you do better in the future?
- What practical steps can you take to ensure your group remains focused on Christ and the Great Commission? Explain.

PRAYER:

- Pray for wisdom and grace in leading the group through differences.
- Pray for unity and mutual respect within the group.
- Pray for a focus on Christ and His mission for the Church to make disciples.



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

UPCOMING CLASSES:

Discipleship Track:

- Kahala Discipleship Track, **October 6, 13, 20, 27, and November 3 from 10:30 am - 12:00 pm** in the Conference Room at Kahala Elementary School

Freedom Weekend:

- Main Campus Men's Freedom, **September 28, from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm** in classroom 1 at Main Campus
- Main Campus Women's Freedom, **September 28, from 9:30 am - 3:30 pm** in the Hub at Main Campus
- Kahala Men's Freedom Weekend, **Saturday, October 12, from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm** in the Hub at Main Campus
- Kahala Women's Freedom Weekend, **Saturday, October 12, from 9:00 am - 2:30 pm** in the Hub at Main Campus

FUTURE SMALL GROUP LEADERS SUMMITS:

September 14, 2024 - All Small Group Leaders Summit (*Leaders only)

If you have any questions or concerns, please email smallgroups@pearlside.org.