

## CORE GROUP STUDIES

The church planter should form the core group with a proper understanding of its purpose. It exists to become the nucleus of leaders necessary to make possible the launching of a new church. The core group members may come from the “harvest,” that is they may be made up of unchurched people. They may be formerly churched or never churched. They may be carnal Christians or they may be new Christians.

The members may also come from a “hiving off” process in which one or more sponsor/partner churches sends out their members to assist in the new plant. These core group members may already be workers, but they should be properly trained and oriented before being placed in service.

The church planter should direct his Core Group Studies toward accomplishing at least four (4) objectives:

1. **Impart**—Share from your heart how God revealed to you the new church’s purpose, core values, vision, and belief statements. You may consult the Foundational Statements worksheets for assistance in articulating these statements. This process of vision casting is vital and should be done naturally but intentionally throughout the process. Your goal is to impart your passion for the new church to them. The core group members should own the vision and be energized by it. They will become your most valuable vision casters as you develop the new church.
2. **Implant**—Spend the necessary time in the studies to implant basic biblical truths into the lives of the core group members. Your leaders need to be well grounded as disciples in order to make other disciples. Twenty-one (21) Core Group Studies on various critical themes follow for your help in this process. Make sure that you convey to the core group that your new church will be built on the solid rock of the Word of God and the Lordship of Christ.
3. **Instruct**—In addition to imparting purpose, values, and vision as well as implanting the biblical basics, the church planter should instruct the core group members in key areas. He should help them to know the difference between the roles of form and function in doing church. He should also help them to grasp what it means to experience authentic community, your approach to outreach, how you will worship, develop leaders, organize the church for ministry, and address stewardship. These are all included in the Core Group Studies.
4. **Implement**—The church planter should be at ease in using some of the study time for practical implementation as well. He can lay out the organizational structure, lead in setting goals, do evaluation, and assign and train members for responsibilities in preparation for launch Sunday and beyond. He will solicit the input of the core group in planning the first 100 days. An instrument to guide this process is included as a worksheet.

Selected activities from this plan can be shared in brochure form on launch day to create interest and ongoing involvement.

According to Philip Bryant in Church Planting Workbook, Baptist Union of Victoria, 1992, page 46, "It must also be remembered that once the church begins public worship services the Core Group should **never** meet again. Core Group members need to simply become part of the church. They need to spread themselves among the new attendees, welcome them and involve themselves in their lives. In this way they become the 'leaven' that unites the new church."

### Study Starters

The following are simply study starters arranged in an order that should provide some direction for the church planter. They are not intended to be exhaustive by design. The purpose of the starters is just that, help the church planter know where and how to start with the core group. He may want to rearrange, add, or delete as he proceeds to customize and contextualize to best fit his situation. The twenty-one (21) studies should take the church planter through the preparation phase as he moves toward launch Sunday.

1. ***The Concept of Church.*** The word translated "church" in the New Testament is "ekklesia." It is a compound word from "ek" meaning "out of" and "kaleo" meaning "to call." The word was first used to designate any assembly. Once used of the assembly of Christian disciples, it took on a deeper meaning. It referred to those who through Christ had been called out of the world (this present evil system) and into a relationship with God and one another.

The Church can be thought of as both universal and local. Most of the time when it is mentioned in the New Testament, it refers to local churches. Just as the Bible refers to the Church in Ephesus or Corinth, so we can refer to the Church in your local target community. The Church is made up of born-again, baptized, believers joined together with a purpose. That purpose is to glorify God through making disciples. Teach the core group that this is not their church or even your church—it is God's church! He enables us as human instruments to join Him in birthing a new congregation. Helpful verses: Matt. 16:13-20; 28:16-20; Acts 1:4-11; 2:1-47.

2. ***How to Be Sure You Are a Christian.*** Every church should be composed of born again Christians. This is what theologians commonly refer to as a "regenerate membership." **Do not assume that core group members are Christians.** Very early in the studies you should share the gospel in a simple way and give those present an opportunity to pray to receive Christ as their Savior and Lord. Rejoice with those who respond and begin discipling them. The best study I have discovered is One-to-One Discipling by Al and Lorraine Broom with Church Dynamics International. This resource is

referenced in the worksheets. Helpful verses: Jn. 3:16; 10:10; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; Rom. 5:8; Jn. 1:11-12; Rev. 3:20; I Jn. 5:11-13; Heb. 13:5; I Jn. 1:9.

3. ***The Attributes of God.*** The church planter and his core group should cultivate a genuine hunger to know God. It is only as we come to know God and His character that we can trust Him fully in the midst of the staggering demands of planting a new church. Al Broom on pages 14-18 of One-to-One Discipling lists ten (10) specific attributes of God and divides them into non-moral and moral categories. **Non-moral**—These attributes are those that belong to God exclusively, so that there is nothing resembling them in a created being or spirit. They are as follows: **God is a. sovereign; b. eternal; c. omniscient; d. omnipresent; e. omnipotent; f. immutable (never changing).** **Moral**—These attributes belong to God, and are seen in God's relating to mankind. We can see limited manifestations of these attributes in His created beings and spirits. They are as follows: **God is a. righteous; b. just; c. love; d. veracity (absolute truth).** Helpful verses: I Chron. 22:19; Ps. 42:1-2; 103:19; Rev. 1:8; Heb. 4:13; Jer. 23:24; Phil. 3:20-21; Num. 23:19; Deu. 32:4; I Th. 1:3-10; I Jn. 4:7-8; Ps. 33:4.
4. ***How to Know the Bible.*** The Bible is the source from which we learn and grow spiritually. It is the Word of God, inspired, inerrant, infallible, and completely trustworthy. Teach your core group that they can stake their very lives on the integrity of the Bible. The Navigator illustration of the "hand" is a graphic way to convey how a Christian can make the Bible theirs. The fingers, beginning with the little finger and continuing to the thumb are labeled **hear, read, study, memorize, and meditate.** Teach your core group how to do each of these and lead them to make a daily commitment to spend time in the Bible. Stress the importance of personal application of biblical truth. Dwight L. Moody once said, "The Scriptures were not given to increase our knowledge but to change our lives." Helpful verses: II Tim. 3:16; Rom. 10:17; Rev. 1:3; Ac. 17:11; Ps. 119:9-11; 1:2-3.
5. ***The Impact of Prayer***—Prayer is the natural overflow of spending quality and quantity time in God's Word. If the Bible is the skeleton, then prayer is the flesh on the bones. If the Bible is like food to the Christian, then prayer is like breath. Design a study centered around answering the following questions: a. What is prayer? b. Who can pray? c. Why are we to pray? d. To whom do we pray? e. When should we pray? f. What should be included in prayer? g. How can we pray with confidence?

Bathe everything you do in prayer. Ask God to reveal to you where He is at work and make whatever adjustments necessary to join Him in His work. God can do more in five (5) minutes that we can do in fifty (50) years on our own. Impress upon your core group members the importance of beginning each day in a personal quiet time with God. Help them to understand how to live each day in an attitude of prayer. Helpful verses: Jer. 33:3; Jam. 4:2; Heb. 4:14-16; Jn. 14:13-14; Isa. 59:12; Matt. 21:22; I Thes. 5:17; Pro. 15:8; Matt. 6:9-10; I Tim. 2:5; Rom. 8:26.

6. ***The Purpose of Our Church***—Share with the group how God revealed to you the purpose of the new church. Give them each a copy of the statement and share the Scriptures from which it comes. Begin the process of helping them to internalize the purpose. Memorize it together and brainstorm ways to creatively communicate it to your target audience. Convey that everything the church does will be filtered through the purpose. Helpful verses: Matt. 28:16-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-49; Jn. 20:30-31; Ac. 1:8.
7. ***The Values of Our Church***. Philip Bryant in his Church Planting Workbook page 26 gives insights on values. “Values are the principles or standards held by an individual or group. In the church these are both theological and sociological . . . The church has values that to a large measure determine the way it approaches ministry. A new church has the opportunity to clearly define its values from its commencement . . . Once defined values can assist in uniting the church and shaping its future. . . To be effective and enduring these values must be biblically based enabling the church to reflect Jesus.”

Aubrey Malphurs in Planting Growing Churches for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Baker, 1992, pages 253-254, says, “I Define a planted church’s primary values as its constant, passionate, biblical core beliefs that drive its ministries.” His “Core Values Audit” on pages 255-256 will be a great help. Discuss the core values statement you have already prepared. Look one-by-one at each value and share why you hold it to be important for the new church. Ask for the input of the group and be willing to adjust the values, add to them, or delete as the Lord leads. A careful evaluation after the first few years of the new church may reveal that a refinement of values is in order. Helpful verses: 2 Tim. 3:16; Rom. 12:1-2; Matt. 7:7-11; Ac. 2:44-46; 2 Tim. 1:5; Rom. 6:14; I Chron. 12:32; Lk. 19:10; Eph. 4:11-13; Col. 3:23-24.

8. ***The Vision of Our Church***. Luke reports in Acts 4:32 that, “The multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul. . . .” Malphurs underscores this on page 119 and following. “It’s critical to the ultimate success of the new church that it has a single, clear vision. The church must know where it’s going! Without a vision, the church will quickly plateau and simply begin to maintain itself. Maintenance will be followed by a downward spiral that will eventuate in its ultimate, untimely demise.” James White, in Rethinking the Church, Baker, 1997, page 29 says, “Think of the church’s mission (vision) in military terms. It is one thing to know the *purpose* of the particular military unit, such as being an infantry division. It is another to know the specific ‘hill’ the unit is trying to take *as* that infantry division. This has to do with *mission* (vision). A church might understand its purposes but not know what it is trying to accomplish *through* those purposes.”

I like what Philip Bryant says on page 31. “A vision statement is intended to reflect God’s future direction and mission for the church. It provides focus and direction for the congregation. . . .A good vision statement answers the question: ‘Under God, what will this church look like in 5-10 years time?’ . . .

A vision statement from God should be born out of: a. The feasibility study; b. The purpose statement; and c. The central values of the new church." The vision should flow naturally out of the purpose and values statements along with a proper understanding of the needs and make-up of the target community. A vision worksheet along with samples from several new churches can be found under "Foundational Statements." Do you have a single, clear vision for the new church? If not, do not go another step until you get alone with God and seek His revelation. Once you have a vision from God, it is important that you articulate it in writing and begin casting that vision to the core group. These key "pioneer" people must have the vision internalized to experience dynamic and direction. Helpful verses: Pro. 29:18; Hab. 2:1-3; I Sam. 3:1; Dan. 2:17-24; 10:1-21; Ac. 9:1-16; 10:1-48; 16:6-10; 18:9-11; 26:1-23.

9. ***The Beliefs of Our Church.*** Since most new churches are populated with either unchurched or previously churched people, it is vital to teach them the foundational truths of the Word of God. Take time to write out a beliefs statement. Two such statements can be found under "Sample Statements." The 2000 version of The Baptist Faith and Message provides solid and tested guidance. You will probably want to condense it and not use every article. The purpose of the beliefs statement is to lay a foundation upon which the church can stand strong, when the winds of false teaching and uncertainty blow. It should be clearly communicated by the church planter that all decisions to be made by the church will be placed alongside the clear teachings of the Bible. Review the beliefs statement with the core group, give each member a copy, and encourage them to study it. Helpful verses: Acts 2:40-47; 2 Tim. 1:12-13; 2:1-15; Heb. 4:11-13; Psa. 119 (many applicable verses).
10. ***Understanding Function and Form.*** The church planter, led by the Holy Spirit, may likely pursue a model for the new church that is very different from what most people think of as a traditional church. This approach to ministry will be driven by the purpose, vision, values, and unique characteristics as well as needs of his target audience. In order to help the core group enthusiastically embrace the church planter's model, it will be imperative for him to help them understand the difference between **function** and **form**.

Malphurs addressed this issue in June of 2001 before the North American Church Planter's Fellowship. The following are taken from excerpts of his presentation: The **functions** are based on principles and precepts that are found in the Bible. They are biblically mandated. They are just as true in the 21 st century as they were in the 1 st century. Some sample functions are: doctrine, fellowship, prayer, community, worship, and evangelism. Every **function** will have a **form** or more accurately several forms. These forms are based on culture not Scripture (There are no biblically mandated forms!). Sample forms for evangelism would be Evangelism Explosion, prayer evangelism, ministry evangelism, door-to-door, crusade, F.A.I.T.H., etc.

Forms of worship might be traditional, liturgical, contemporary, or blended. Functions are mandates or ministry **precepts**, while forms are methods or ministry **practices**. The functions must **never** change, while the forms **must change** if churches are to minister effectively to their culture with relevance. What we see are the forms that convey the functions. Form must always follow function. The tendency is for people to **equate and confuse** the functions with the forms that convey them. They often value the forms more than the functions they convey. These forms become **sacred**. In their minds functions have only one form—the one they were saved under, grew up with, or have become used to over time.

Help your people to see the truth that many of these forms could be preventing a church from reaching people for Christ (e.g. Postmodern Generation) and it is wrong to continue to use them. Francis Schaeffer in *The Church at the End of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, page 68, said, "In a rapidly changing age like ours, an age of total upheaval like ours, to make non-absolutes absolutes, guarantees both isolation and the death of the institutional, organized church." Help your core group to understand this crucial principle and repeat it often as new people join you. Don't talk about worship style first; for instance, teach the core group concerning biblical worship. Style, then, can flow out of a proper understanding of the target audience and their needs. Helpful verses: Matt. 19:1-10; 23:23-24; Lk. 5:36-39; 6:1-5; 11:37-44; Jn. 4:20-26; Acts 15:1-29.

11. ***The Scope of Our Strategy.*** After you have carefully communicated form and function to the core group, you are ready to interpret the scope of your strategy. Help them understand that while **purpose** and **values** do not change, **vision** and **strategy** do change. Vision may change as the community make-up changes and as societal shifts come about. Strategies will need mid-course adjustments in order to accomplish the vision. Strategy should answer the question, "**What methods will we employ to accomplish God's vision for the new church?**"

Show the core group the Church Planting Blueprint as you have customized it for your new church. Interpret to them why you are incorporating key steps and how they can contribute as important members of the body. You will need to depend heavily on these first pioneer members, so bring them along with you step-by-step. For them to be wholeheartedly following your leadership, they must internalize the concept that your strategy is the practical implementation plan for your vision. An example of this would be how you will lead them to do evangelism.

As stated above, evangelism is a major function of the church. Teach this function from Scripture. Once they have bought into the need to be obedient in witnessing and winning others to Christ, share suggested approaches or strategies for fulfilling this function as a church. These strategies will require enlistment, training, and deployment. You may use F.A.I.T.H., Evangelism Explosion, personal testimonies, relational models, or any number of

approaches. Help the core group to see how your chosen evangelism strategies are uniquely appropriate to your target audience. This same process can be done with small groups/Sunday school, worship, fellowship, etc. Helpful verses: Matt. 10:1-15; Acts 13:13-15; 42-52; 14:1-7.

12. ***The Spirit-filled Life.*** Quickly on the heels of interpreting the scope of your strategy, you will want to teach your core group that this work is a **supernatural work**. Help them to realize that they can do nothing of eternal value in their own strength. Teach them that even though the Holy Spirit indwells every believer, He does not necessarily fill every believer. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is a command to be controlled continually (Eph. 5:18). The fullness of the Spirit is not reserved for select Christians such as pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and the like. Every Christian should be filled with the Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis. Only when this is true will we have the power and direction necessary to be effective and fruitful in ministry.

We can have the best strategy in the world and yet fail miserably, if we are trying to implement it in the power of the flesh. Possibly the most important thing a church planter can do to ensure success in his church plant is to surrender his life totally to the control and power of the Holy Spirit. He cannot lead his people to be filled with the Spirit unless he himself knows the experiential reality of this fullness. Once he does, God will use him to share this life-changing truth with everyone he reaches. When a church planter and his core group are controlled and empowered by the Spirit of God, they constitute an unbeatable army! Helpful verses: Acts 5:3-4; Jn. 14:16-17; I Cor. 2:14-3:3; Gal. 2:20; Jn. 15:1-8; Gal. 5:22-23; I Jn. 1:9; Eph. 5:15-21.

13. ***Building Authentic Community.*** Begin early to communicate to the core group that they are "**saints.**" The Bible often calls Christians saints even though we rarely think of ourselves in these terms. Someone once said, "Either you are a saint or you ain't." In the New Testament the word "saint" is always plural, suggesting that there are no "lone ranger" Christians. Simply stated, we are all in this together. "Saint" is best translated "holy ones." Teach your core group that they are "holy ones," because they have been totally forgiven, cleansed of all sin, and made into new creations through the blood of Jesus Christ. As "holy ones" they are a part of the **family of God!** Much like an intimate earthly family, we should learn from and encourage one another. As we do a certain "chemistry" emerges that is unique to the Christian family and to members of a local church specifically. The "**one another**" passages in the New Testament provide direction as to how a new church can develop authentic community. As members of a new church the core group should realize that they are **members of** one another. They should be **devoted to** one another; **honor** one another; and **be of the same mind with** one another. They should **accept** one another; **admonish** one another; **submit to** one another; and **serve** one another. They should also be careful to **bear with** one another and **encourage** one another. This fellowship may well be the most valuable community of the

new church. According to the Apostle Paul, it is produced by the Spirit and preserved by the saints.

The wise church planter will be sensitive to situations and opportunities to demonstrate these "one another's" in the developing life of the new congregation. He should communicate that every member of the body is important and that God has placed them in the body for a purpose. A study of the high priestly prayer of Jesus (John 17) on the threshold of his departure via the Cross, will reveal that the focus of His prayer was that the Father would **make his disciples one** in the same way as He and the Father are one. In this way the world will know that Jesus was sent from heaven and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Helpful verses: I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:1-2; II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 4:16; Rom. 12:5; I Cor. 12; Rom. 12:10; 15:5-7; 15:14; Eph. 5:21; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12-13; I Thess. 5:11; Jn. 17:20-23.

14. ***Our Outreach Plans.*** As stated above under "The Scope of Our Strategy," one of the church planter's primary responsibilities is to lead his people to understand the imperative function of evangelism. No church is being true to our Lord's Great Commission to "make disciples" unless she is totally committed to and strategically involved in outreach to the lost and unchurched. This outreach should be the natural overflow of passages such as Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8. Your outreach plans should include multiple strategies to impact your local community, the region around your target area, our state, nation and even the world.

The church planter cannot lead his new church to be evangelistic unless he is consistent in sharing his faith. He should have a specific plan for personal involvement in outreach that sets the course for other believers. A personal friend of mine, Dr. Tom Cheyney, who planted three (3) new churches and led them to over 1,000 each in Sunday morning attendance, once told me that his personal goal for outreach contacts was 200 per month. He seldom reached his goal, but God multiplied his efforts in many ways. Because Tom was personally involved in outreach, he was able to challenge his deacons to make 50 visits a month as well. No wonder his new churches grew so rapidly!

Not everyone will respond well to the same type of outreach approach. Therefore, a variety of outreach training should be offered. The church planter could offer training in how to write letters, make phone calls, pray, and visit unchurched people. He could equip a team to assist in door-to-door surveys. Various types of training could be offered in doing relational evangelism. Al and Lorraine Broom in One-to-One Discipling, page 62, list vital steps in becoming a fruitful witness. They are: 1. Be sure that you are a Christian. 2. No unconfessed sin in your life. 3. Be sure you are filled with the Holy Spirit. 4. Be prepared to share your faith. 5. Pray. 6. Go. 7. Talk about Jesus. 8. Expect results. **The main thing is for the church planter to keep the main thing the main thing!** Helpful verses: Matt.

4:19; 10: 1-15; 28:18-20; Mk. 1:17; 16:15; Lk. 14:23; Jn. 1:40-42; 9:25; Ac. 4:8-12; 16:11-15; 22:1-21; 26:1-29; Rom. 1:14-17; 10:8-15; Col. 1:27-29.

15. ***Worship in Our Church.*** Worship is far more than one of the many biblical functions. It is a function but it is the **primary function** for every church and every Christian. All Christian living and ministry should be the natural byproduct of genuine worship. To express worship to God is to extend "**worth**" to Him. Worship is the highest expression of love any child of God can give to his Creator and Lord. The church planter may want to teach on worship from John 4. In this chapter, Jesus encounters the woman at the well. They engage in a discussion of worship that is very insightful. The woman thought of worship as restricted to a certain place. Many today also envision worship as only taking place in a church building. Many today also worship in ignorance. Jesus told the woman, "You worship what you do not know. . ." (v. 22) Jesus continues to teach that, ". . . true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him." (v. 23) Teach your core group that true worship must be in "**spirit**" or from the **heart**. It must also be in "**truth**" or in keeping with **biblical teachings**.

Only after the church planter has taught concerning biblical worship (**function**), should he explain the specific worship style (**form**) he is suggesting for the new church. Whatever worship style the church chooses, it should be sensitive to seekers. Worship styles, however, should not be seeker-driven. That is, care should be taken to avoid embarrassment for seekers, but the primary purpose of worship services is for Christians to **glorify and praise God**. Each church planter must lead his core group to determine prayerfully what is appropriate in worship for their unique situation. Helpful verses: Isa. 6:1-8; Matt. 18:20; Jn. 4:19-26; I Cor. 14:23; Col. 4:5.

16. ***Obedience in the Christian Walk.*** According to the Apostle Paul in Romans 6, a Christian is a person who **was** a slave of sin and self and has **become** a slave to righteousness and God (vv. 17 –18). Salvation does not eliminate slavery. It simply changes masters! You don't have to beg a slave to obey. When the Master speaks, he simply and immediately obeys. Obedience is a major theme in both the Old and New Testaments (Gen. 22:1-3, 9-12; Psa. 40:8; I Sam. 15:22; Jer. 7:23; Zec. 7:11-14; Jn. 14:15, 21, 23.)

Broom states on page 91, "Some acts of obedience are more internal. They have to do with attitudes, habits, motives, sense of values, and day-to-day thoughts. These internal acts of obedience eventually surface in relationships with other people. The proof of your love for God is your demonstrated obedience to Him." Teach your core group the passages in the New Testament that speak of the Christian's "walk." (Many are listed below in Helpful Verses.) Help them to understand that every Christian is a new creation in Christ (II Cor. 5:17) and as such he or she should draw on

the power of the Holy Spirit to say “no” to self and “yes” to God on a daily, moment-by-moment basis. Someone has said that inch-by-inch the Christian life is a synch! Make sure that the core group realizes that the goal of obedience is that they may come to know Christ intimately and lead others to do so as well. Highlight for them the dangers of disobedience also. You may want to teach this using the example of King Saul in I Samuel 15:18-23. It is imperative that the church planter clearly shares what a Christian must do when he or she disobeys. Lead them to memorize I John 1:9 and show them that the confession spoken of involves at least three (3) elements: 1. Telling God about your sins. 2. Turning away from your sins (repentance). 3. Trusting God to forgive your sins (based on His promise and not your feelings). You could share biblical examples of obedience, promises and blessings of obedience, and the nature of obedience. The Navigators say that an obedient Christian has: A **mind** through which Christ **thinks**; a **life** through which Christ **shows**; a **voice** through which Christ **speaks**; and a **hand** through which Christ **helps**. Helpful verses: Rom. 6:4; 8:4; II Cor. 5:7; Eph. 2:10; 5:2; 5:8; II Jn. 4, 6; I Pet. 1:13-16; Gen. 12:1-4; Heb. 11:8; Ac. 13:22; Heb. 10:7; Jn. 14:15; I Jn. 3:22; Matt. 21:28-32; Matt. 22:40; Psa. 40:8; Lk. 5:4-5.

17. ***Dealing with Temptation and Spiritual Warfare.*** Remind your core group that God loves them unconditionally but He hates their sin. Sin always injures, kills, and destroys. God is serious in dealing with our sin because He wants to provide for and protect his children. No one, not even faithful Christians, is immune to temptation. Teach your core group to memorize I Corinthians 10:13. This is the key verse on temptation that gives direction on how to deal with it practically. Make them aware that they cannot overcome temptation and live victoriously in their strength (see 12. “The Spirit Filled Life”). Teach the core group that they must understand that every temptation will come through one (1) of three (3) sources: 1. The **Devil** attacks the **spirit**. 2. The **world** attacks the **soul**. 3. The **flesh** attacks the **body**. Teach them the following strategy to resist temptation and defeat the attacks: 1. When the Devil attacks the spirit, **resist** (Jam. 4:7). 2. When the world attacks the soul, **check out your love life** (I Jn. 2:15). 3. When the flesh attacks the body, **run as fast as you can** (II Tim. 2:22)! Make it clear to the group that when they are tempted, if they allow themselves to **rationalize** (I won’t hurt just this once. Everybody’s doing it.), they will usually **compromise** (Yield to temptation and sin.). Helpful Verses: I Cor. 10:13; Jam. 1:13-14; I Jn. 2:15-16; I Pet. 5:8; II Thess. 3:3; Heb. 4:15; Matt. 6:9,13; Psa. 119:9,11; I Jn. 5:4-5; Jam. 4:7; Eph. 6:10-11.
18. ***The Laity in Our Church.*** A vital concept to teach the core group and the developing church is that **every member is a minister**. Technically, there is no such thing as a **volunteer**! Every Christian is a vital part of God’s army. A Christian’s vocation is serving Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit for His glory. He or she may practice medicine, work as a fireman, policeman, nurse, teacher, or some other profession. Regardless of one’s profession, a Christian’s vocation is serving his or her Master. This principle

must be taught at the very beginning or else the new church will likely adopt the mindset that permeates most established churches today—"We pay the pastor to do the ministry." Bryant, on page 52, aptly says, "In God's Kingdom, and in the Church of Jesus Christ there are no spectators, only participators." He also states three major ideas around which a church planter could design a study on the subject of the laity. 1. Every Christian is responsible for exercising his or her own personal gifts given by God. 2. The role of the pastor is to be leader—equipper. 3. The health of any church will depend upon the laity's involvement in the ministry of the church. Teach what the Bible says about spiritual gifts. Help each member to discover how he or she is W.I.R.E.D. (Refer to the worksheet with this title.). Get them involved in the appropriate apprenticeship opportunities as they begin serving in the life of the new church. Helpful Verses: I Cor. 12—14; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:1-16.

19. ***Principles of Stewardship.*** Do not believe what many say that you cannot talk about money at church. Even though it is true that many unchurched people feel that the church talks far too much about money, it can be done in a palatable and positive way. An entire article can be found in the worksheets titled, "Dealing with Money at Church." Teach what the Bible says about a Christian and his relationship to wealth and possessions. Jesus actually had more to say about this than heaven and hell combined! Share your own heart about your experience with stewardship. Be transparent. Teach the following principles and others that you know: 1. God **owns** everything. 2. We are simply to be **managers** of His property. 3. The most important giving is to first **give oneself** to the Lord. 4. Giving to the Lord's work is a tangible demonstration of your **love** for God and His **Lordship** over your life. 5. Every believer should **tithe**, but the tithe is just the **beginning**. 6. You can't **out give** God. 7. If we follow God's direction and allow Him to be first, we can trust Him to **provide** our needs. 8. It is important to set up sound **financial principles** for the church with high integrity and accountability (Refer to F.U.N.D.S. in the worksheets.) 9. You may want to give every core group member a 3x5 card as ask them to write what they expect to give to the church the **first year**. Do not have them sign the card. This will give you a good idea of what to expect from the core group. Obviously you will be reaching others in the first year and the income will greatly exceed this first estimate. Helpful Verses: Mal.3: 6-12; Matt. 24:14-28; Lk. 6:38; 12:13-48; 16:1-14; II Cor. 8:1-7; 8:15; 9:1-15; Phil.4:10-20.
20. ***Developing Leaders for Our Church.*** The most valuable resource in any new church is its leaders. The ministry will rise or fall on that leadership. According to Bryant on page 60, "Leadership is the ability to motivate, organize and guide people towards common goals." John Maxwell's famous quote is well known, "Leadership is **influence.**" The greatest example of leadership in the Bible is Jesus' approach as he trained his disciples to take the gospel to the world. The worksheet, "Walking in the Word or Steps to Spiritual Maturity" provides a specific plan for developing leaders. Some of

the elements are: New Believer Follow-Up; Discovery Class/Covenant; Discovering How You Are W.I.R.E.D.; One-to-One Discipleship; Apprenticeship; Evangelism Training; Hands-ON Missions Exposure. The New Testament reveals at least five roles of leadership: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor (Elder, Overseer, Bishop), and Deacon. Their functions were to guide the body, minister the Word, equip the members for service, protect from false teachers, and visit and care for the needy. The qualifications for these leaders can be divided into four categories: 1. Character. 2. Spiritual. 3. Family. 4. Spiritual gifts. The qualifications of pastors and deacons are very similar. It should be communicated that the church will function according to congregational polity. In other words, the final authority in decision-making lies with the people. A wise church planter will develop his leadership team, usually made up of the laity, and allow them to carry out the ministry. He will always be out front pointing the way, motivating, and encouraging, but he must give away the ministry to them. In the final analysis, his success in the new church will be measured in terms of equipped leaders. "Walking in the Word" provides the tools needed to accomplish this. A simple example of a process to follow in leadership development involves six (6) steps: 1. You perform the ministry. 2. You do it while the apprentice observes. 3. Allow the apprentice to help you. 4. Let the apprentice do it while you observe. 5. Share your helpful insights after he finishes. 6. Let the apprentice do it alone and share about it later. Helpful Verses: Acts 1:15-26; 6:1-7; 11:19-30; 13; 1-3; 15:1-19; I Tim. 3:8-12; 5:17; I Pet. 5:3; Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2; Eph. 4:11; Ac. 20:28-30; Jam. 5:14.

21. ***The Organization of Our Church.*** The church planter should organize the new church around several leadership teams or committees, which ever he prefers (Refer to "Team Basics" in the worksheets for help with teams). These teams will probably emerge from each of the five (5) biblical functions (Worship, Evangelism, Discipleship, Ministry, and Fellowship) and a few practical functions (Administration and Financial Management). A good example of this can be referenced in the worksheet under "Options for Organizational Structures." Matt Hall, founding pastor of Canopy Roads Baptist Church in Tallahassee, Florida, has developed an organizational structure worthy of mention. The following are his leadership teams and each of their respective objective statements: **Resource Management Team**—Exists to oversee the ministries of the church to ensure that the mission of the church is accomplished and to maximize the use of personal and fiscal resources in the local church to build the Kingdom of God. **Worship Team**—Exists to magnify God by leading people to experience the living Christ through the performing arts, praise, prayer, and proclamation. **Outreach Team**—Exists to multiply believers by discovering the unchurched, diagnosing their spiritual condition, sharing the gospel, and connecting them to a local church. **Discipleship Team**—Exists to mature the church by educating, nurturing, and equipping members through the lordship of the Holy Spirit to become reproducing disciples of the Lord Jesus. **Membership Team**—Exists to meet the special needs of church members,

build strong relationships and promote wholeness in the church through individual and group ministries. **Community Ministries Team**—Exists to meet the needs of persons outside the church thus providing an example of Christian love and unity to the community. Each team leader is elected by the church to serve a four-year rotating term, to give direction to the church as the **Administrative Ministries Team**. The pastor serves on this team as well. The Administrative Ministries Team and the pastor are ultimately responsible to the congregation and report on a regular basis. Whatever organizational structure you use, keep in mind that it should follow congregational polity, give opportunity for input from the body, do everything “above board,” and utilize the gifts and talents of the members to the fullest. Helpful Verses: I Cor. 12; Rom. 12; Eph. 4:11-13; Jn. 4:20-26; Ac. 1:8; Rom. 8:28-30; Ac. 2:42; Matt. 25:31-46.

### **The Core Group Meeting**

Philip Bryant, in his Church Planting Workbook, Baptist Union of Victoria, 1992, page 45, provides wise counsel for the church planter on how to conduct the core group meetings.

The core group meeting should be held on a weekly basis for a minimum of 3 months prior to the establishment of the new church. These meetings need to consist of a number of elements so as to be effective in preparing people for involvement in establishing the new church. The meeting should consist of the following elements:

- **Worship**
- **Training** (Use the above Study Starters.)
- **Prayer** (This should be focused on specific issues related to the establishment of the new church.)
- **Planning** (Some planning should be done each week relating to the different stages of the church’s development. Every opportunity should be taken to reinforce the vision at these meetings.)
- **Offering** (As a sign of commitment to the new church, an offering should be received at each core group meeting. This is also used to build up a fund to pay for the establishment costs of the new church.)