

Becoming a Cultural Architect: *The Role of the LIFE Group Point Leader*

Leadership section

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Over the course of time, every group of people develops its own culture. A group's culture is made up of its shared values, patterns of relating, and collective understanding of the group's broader purpose. In order to develop a healthy missional culture, the LIFE Group point leader must continually fight against forces (human and demonic) which try to shape the group's culture into something that is not compatible with the LIFE vision. This is why we believe that the point leader's main role is to be a *cultural architect*. Some key threats to the development of a missional culture are:

1. Lack of leadership buy-in
2. Failure to match forms with functions
3. Creation of a leadership bottleneck
4. Resistance to evaluation and adaptation

The importance of leadership buy-in

“If a leader wants his followers to bleed over something, he must hemorrhage!”
“Following Christ is more caught than taught.”

Both of the above sayings point to the primacy of leadership buy-in. In order to effectively lead people to follow the Master and engage in His mission together, the LIFE Group leader must personally embody the LIFE vision. The leader must make great effort to build his/her life around the Master and His mission. In addition, the leader must work to welcome others into his/her life. Three primary ways that the leader can do this are to:

- ***Openly share your successful and unsuccessful experiences.*** People need to hear how you are embracing the LIFE vision. However, people often learn even more from us when we share how we are dealing with unsuccessful experiences. It helps most people to know that their leader is also grappling with how to more fully follow Christ and His mission. People need to know that the leader is not perfect, but progressing. This is often a great source of encouragement for followers to feel the freedom to take risks as well.
- ***Bang the drum! Bang the drum!*** It has been said that a group must be reminded of the core vision every 21 days. If the group is not reminded frequently of the core vision, the group will begin to experience “vision leaks.” Thus, a great way for the leader to demonstrate buy-in is to just

continually talk about the LIFE vision. People know what we value by listening to what we most frequently talk about, so talk it up!

- ***Celebrate progress! Mourn hard-heartedness.*** People also learn what we value by what we celebrate and what we mourn. Call attention to people who seem to be getting it. Appropriately mourn when you or others don't get it. However, be careful that you aren't just faking it. People can tell what is real. Authentic emotion can be a powerful catalyst for growth in others.

The importance of developing “more than a meeting”

It is next to impossible to effectively engage all 4 LIFE functions in one meeting a week. When we do things that connect with outsiders, we typically limit how deep we can go with insiders. Likewise, when we are focused on building up insiders, we are typically ineffective in relevantly engaging outsiders. Thus, LIFE Groups must be “more than a meeting.” Another way of saying this is that our forms must be driven by our functions. We must first ask “why” and then ask “how” when planning to do anything. There are a limitless number of forms that LIFE Groups can institute in order to fulfill the LIFE functions. *Inserted in this section is **one proposed way of thinking about LIFE Group forms, but feel free to create forms that work for you and your LIFE Group!***

The importance of avoiding the “leadership bottleneck”

It is so easy for shepherds to give all their time to caring for the sheep, and neglect to develop other shepherds! When this happens a bottleneck of leadership develops, and it severely limits the growth potential of the group and its individual members. As a result, we expect LIFE Group leaders to multiply themselves (to “work themselves out of a job”). This is simply the way Jesus modeled leadership for us. He loved the masses, taught many who were interested, but only trained a few. He gave most of His time to the development of 12 men (and gave even more to 3 – Peter, James, and John). We ought to follow the same pattern today. *This section contains several resources to help you think rightly and get started investing in a few.*

The importance of honest evaluation and adjustment

The definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over again, but expect different results! We must lovingly develop and use honest feedback and evaluation tools if we are going to keep progressing in our fulfillment of the LIFE vision. Appropriate evaluation helps us know where we are strong and where we are weak. If used wisely, it can also be used as a catalyst for healthy adjustments and change. *There is an entire section dedicated to evaluation tools. Please share other tools you find helpful as well!*

