Spiritual Leadership

CREATING COMMUNITIES THAT LOVE: TEAM TRAINING FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS



The Art of Spiritual Leadership

Creating Communities That Love: Team Training for Christian Leaders

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Scripture from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®).

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Published by Grafted Life Ministries (Grafted Life).

For more information about the ministries of Grafted Life, visit our website at www.graftedlife.org

Design by Ryan Swindoll.

Illustration © Geoff Parker / Design Collaborative LLC.

Audio by Landon Swindoll / What About the Sound Productions.

Edition 4, September 2018

ISBN-10: 1-7328747-1-9

ISBN-13: 978-1-7328747-1-8

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Dear leader,

Welcome to *The Art of Spiritual Leadership!* We believe that every Christian who is called as a leader is an instrument for God's transforming love. Whether you run staff meetings, guide a Bible study, host a supper group, or lead in any other group setting, we've designed this experience to *tune* your leadership to resonate with the humility and hospitality of our Lord Jesus.

As Christians, we are connected in an eternal spiritual community established by Christ. From the *great cloud of witnesses* who encourage our faith, to the fellow believers who sit across the aisle in worship, we share one heritage: one Father who is over *all and through all*, one Savior who *bonds us in love*. Catching a full vision for our community as the Body of Christ can breathe new life into all of our interactions, both in and out of the church, but especially in contexts where we serve as group leaders.

Over the course of this training, you will learn how to cultivate group togetherness that transcends your differences as people. You will discover leadership tools that empower your community to deeply love God and one another. You will build habits of prayer and preparation that will continue to develop your leadership skills long after this training concludes.

So let's get started! Training administrators should turn to the next few pages where they will find a checklist for implementing this program in their community setting. Participants can move straight to Session One. Session One will walk you through the self-study activities, clarify our goals and values, and begin your journey to deepen your leadership skills.

Our hopes and prayers surround you. May God's kingdom increase because of the love that works through your leadership.

Blessings,

Debbie Swindoll and Monica Romig Green Authors of *The Art of Spiritual Leadership*

YOUR TRAINING SCHEDULE

<u>Instructions:</u> Fill out the following chart with your training group prior to beginning *The Art of Spiritual Leadership*. Record the time, location, and date of each scheduled group meeting. Then either randomly assign names or take volunteers for the acting leader slots until all the slots are filled. Each person should sign up to be the acting leader at least once. Depending on the size of your group, some may sign up two or more times. No one should sign up to lead a 1st and 2nd hour back-to-back.

Time and Location of your Group Meetings

When and where will you meet?

Date Write the date of the group meeting	1st Hour Leader Write a name in each slot Stays 15 min early, 15 min after	2ND Hour Leader Write a name in each slot Stays 15 min after
Session One	Acting Leader	Acting Leader
Session Two	Acting Leader	Acting Leader
Session Three	Acting Leader	Acting Leader
Session Four	Acting Leader	Acting Leader
Session Five	Acting Leader	Acting Leader
Session Six	Acting Leader	Acting Leader

YOUR TRAINING GROUP

<u>Instructions:</u> Fill out the following chart with your training group prior to beginning *The Art of Spiritual Leadership*. Copy down the names and contact information for the members of your training group. When it is your turn as the acting leader, you will be responsible to contact the group in the event of emergency, reschedule, or cancellation.

Group Members	Contact Information	
	Include a phone number and email address	
Administrator	Contact Information	

Getting Started

FOR ADMINISTRATORS ONLY

Read the Implementation Guide

- 1. Open a web browser on your computer or mobile device.
- 2. Use the address bar and go to www.graftedlife.org/asl/admin
- 3. Read the ASL Implementation page.

This brief administrative page explains how to setup the training. The Art of Spiritual Leadership is a self-directed training process, but an administrator is required to get the process started.

4. Proceed with the Administrative Checklist on page 9.

Who do I contact with administrative questions?

Grafted Life is available to answer any questions not addressed by this Getting Started guide or by the website. Please contact us at info@graftedlife.org with your name, church community, and specific inquiry.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHECKLIST

[] Identify the Training Participants

4-8 weeks out

3-6 weeks out

Determine which group leaders will participate in the training and obtain a commitment from them. Participants will attend a kick-off meeting, 6 group meetings, and complete 1-2 hours of self-study work between meetings.

Divide Participants into Training Groups 4-8 weeks out

Participants need to be placed in small groups with one another for purposes of the training. Groups may range in size from 3-12 members. The optimal group size is 6 members. Participants will remain with their group for the duration of the training.

[] Schedule the Group Meetings 3-6 weeks out

Each training group will meet once per session, with 6 meetings in total. Each group meets independently: groups do not interact with other groups. Session meetings are scheduled weekly, biweekly, or monthly; or they can be combined into several day-long training events.

See our website for sample schedules and recommended alternatives.

Attendance is greatly important. Confirm that all participants are able to commit to the dates and times of the meeting schedule.

[] Reserve the Meeting Spaces

Each session meeting is 2 hours long. We instruct some participants to arrive 15 minutes prior to start and stay 15 minutes after dismissal. Therefore, the meeting space should be reserved at least 2.5 hours.

Make sure that each space has sufficient comfortable seating and that the space is private with minimal interruptions and distractions.

Order the Notebooks

2-4 weeks out

Participants use The Art of Spiritual Leadership book to complete their training assignments. Each participant will need their own copy.

When placing an order for materials, please allow at least two weeks for order fulfillment and shipping.

Hold a Kick-off Meeting

Start date

The Kick-off Meeting starts the training process for all participants. At this time, participants will receive their copy of The Art of Spiritual Leadership and begin the training activities.

Schedule a meeting space large enough to accommodate all of the training groups at once. The optimal setup is to place training groups around tables so that they can interact with each other.

The Kick-off Meeting lasts 1 hour, and is held at least 1 week in advance of the first scheduled group meetings. The training administrator will facilitate the Kick-off Meeting agenda, found on page 11.

Follow-up with Absentees

After start date

If any participants miss the Kick-off Meeting, make sure to follow up with them so that they have all the materials and information they need to begin the training on time.

Pray

At all times

Ask God for His leading, guiding, and blessing on this training and all who participate, for the sake of your Christian community, the spread of the gospel, and the growth of His Kingdom.

KICK-OFF MEETING

The following agenda is a template for an initial meeting that signals the start of The Art of Spiritual Leadership. We highly recommend this initial meeting, even if you have as few as three participants in the training, as it will serve to inform, equip, and motivate participants to begin their first activities.

Meeting Details

Objective Equip training groups with everything they will need to

complete The Art of Spiritual Leadership on their own

Length Approximately 1 hour

Attendees All group leaders who are participating in

The Art of Spiritual Leadership

Location Auditorium, multi-purpose, or conference room with

seating to accommodate interaction in training groups

Materials Needed

- The Art of Spiritual Leadership notebooks, one for each participant
- Any informational handouts you intend to distribute, such as participantgroup designations, meeting schedules, or training commentary
- Name tags, if participants are not already personally acquainted with the people in their training groups

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- 1. Have participants sit with their training groups.
- 2. Welcome everyone to the meeting. Share with them your hopes and desires for this training process.
- 3. Lead everyone in an opening prayer.

Training Orientation

- 1. Distribute *The Art of Spiritual Leadership* books to everyone.
- 2. Answer any questions.

If you don't know the answer to a question, assure them that most questions will be answered by the book as the training goes along.

Group Information and Setup

- 1. Direct everyone to open their books to "Your Training Schedule" and "Your Training Group" on pages 6-7.
- 2. Have each training group complete these two pages using the instruction we provide. Answer any questions.

Some people may feel anxiety about signing up to go first as the acting leader. You can assure them that the role of acting leader involves only a few additional responsibilities that are fully explained by the notebook. Regardless of how they feel, there is no advantage to going later. Each person will get just as much out of the exercise, whether first or last.

- 3. Verify that each training group has completed "Your Training Schedule" accurately. Make sure that...
 - ...every participant signed up at least once.
 - ...every acting leader slot is filled in.
 - ...that no one is signed up for two slots in a row.

Admin Checklist

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Getting Started

Icebreaker Activity

This activity takes 10-20 minutes, depending on the average group size. Even if participants already know each other, this activity can encourage groups to engage at a deeper level of dialogue than they may be accustomed to.

Pick 1 or 2 questions from the list below that best fit the level of familiarity that group members have with one another. The better they know one another, the further down the list you should choose.

Make sure that everyone in each group has an opportunity to share.

- What is your name and what kind of group do you lead (or are going to lead)?
- How long have you been a group leader and how did you start leading groups?
- What is your favorite aspect of group leadership?
- What two adjectives would you use to describe your leadership style?
- How or where do you most sense God's presence in your leadership?

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About 5-10 minutes before the end of the meeting, call everyone back to your attention. Invite the community to join with you in prayer.

- Thank God for the opportunity for each participant to grow in their leadership skills and love for the Body of Christ.
- Ask for God's will to be done for each participant throughout the training.
- Ask God to provide for the needs of each participant as they work to complete the training.
- Ask for spiritual protection over each training group.
- Bless these leaders as they seek to grow in humility and hospitality.

Thank everyone for coming. Dismiss the meeting.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Online Materials

The training content for *The Art of Spiritual Leadership* is found in six audioonly podcasts which are licensed to users of this curriculum. On page 26, we instruct participants on how to access the podcasts:

- 1. Go to www.graftedlife.org on your computer or mobile device and log in with an existing account or register a new account. You can create a free account using the "Member Login" menu on the main navigation bar.
- From the account dashboard, click to "Add Online Content."
- Input the following case-sensitive code: CNPUD5T3
- Bookmark www.graftedlife.org/podcasts for quick access.

In addition to the training podcasts, participants can download digital copies of the leadership tools and worksheets referenced by this training.

Next Steps

Leaders who complete *The Art of Spiritual Leadership* may desire small group study materials that compliment this training. Grafted Life provides short-term and long-term studies for groups that give structure and support to leaders. Please view our resources on page 181 for more information.



SESSION ONE

Life in the Body

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!

It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard,

On the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes!

It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion!

For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Psalm 133

Training Assignments

SESSION OVERVIEW

As we begin our training in the art of leading others, we want to start by thinking about the big picture: every Christian group is part of the larger Body of Christ. Scripture inspires us with a vision for life in the Body. Whenever we meet together as believers, we have the opportunity to function as members of Christ's family and to operate in the values of His Kingdom.

Throughout our sessions together, we will highlight two significant realities of life in the Body. The first is that we are related to one another through a spiritual bond. We have been reconciled to God and to each other through Christ's sacrifice, and we are sustained in relationship because of God's constant presence with us. The second is that life in the Body is meant to be characterized by love—love for God and love for one another. Every time we interact with one another, we are responsible to love.

Learning Objectives

- 1. Understand the concept of spiritual community as God's desire and intention for the church
- 2. Honestly assess your past personal experience and present expectations for group interaction
- 3. Develop a new or renewed vision for loving interaction in your ministry

Session One

Daily Exercise

The following self-study activities are your individual training for Session One. Each activity should be completed prior to the Session One group meeting, in the order listed. In total, these activities will require between 60-90 minutes of your time, so schedule them in advance.

Introduction A Leader Is an Artist, Humility and Hospitality, and

Learning through Hands-On Experience (10 minutes)

Daily Exercise On Ephesians 3:14-21 (5 minutes each day)

Training Podcast God's Vision for Spiritual Community (20 minutes)

Reflect and Pray Your Expectations, Your Experience, and Your Hopes

and Dreams (40 minutes)

For Future Study

Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community, by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Originally published in 1939. Multiple publications available today.

> In this classic work on life in the Church, Bonhoeffer explores the privilege of living together in the Body of Christ. His advice is thoughtprovoking and practical for anyone who desires to know more about living in fellowship and community with other Christians.

Becoming a True Spiritual Community: A Profound Vision of What the Church Can Be, by Larry Crabb. Published by Thomas Nelson, 2007. (Also published in 1999 under the title The Safest Place on Earth.)

> In this helpful book on spiritual community, Crabb casts a vision for life in the Church. His writing is full of personal examples and encounters that provide needed illustration for a definition of spiritual community and a practical picture of what it could look like.

For Future Study reading is optional and will not be referenced by the training.

INTRODUCTION

A Leader Is an Artist

Leading others is an art. That idea might inspire, intrigue, or scare you from wanting to participate in leadership. The truth is that being an artist in any field is less mysterious or romantic than it appears. Most artists work hard at their craft—they learn skills, practice with tools, persevere even when they are not "inspired," listen to others' feedback, and often start over or make corrections along the way. Artists—good ones—are always learning, exploring, playing, and risking in the hope that within their work something beautiful, meaningful, and yes, even a little mysterious will emerge.

In *The Art of Spiritual Leadership* we want to encourage you to embrace the art of being a good leader in the Body of Christ. We believe there are unique aspects of serving in this important spiritual role. Scripture informs us that we abide together in a spiritual community, that we are related to one another through a spiritual bond. Christ's blood has created a family, brought together to love God and one another. Our spiritual connection is assured through the ever-present help of Christ's Spirit who abides with us individually and as we meet together as believers. The Spirit's presence is meant to impact everything that we do as Christians. We are no longer meant to operate on our own. We have, as a body, been reconciled into an abiding relationship with Christ—a relationship that requires us to love one another so that the world recognizes that we belong to Him.

Because that spiritual truth contains a lot of mystery, we can find ourselves floundering to know how to enter into a relationship with the Spirit, whom we cannot see. Although we see each other, it can be equally as difficult to learn to relate to one another on the basis of our spiritual connection. We often default to operating with other Christians on a strictly human level, preferring relationships with those who we find it easy to love, or relying on the more superficial connection of our common interests or opinions. This can result in our Christian relationships operating no differently than their secular counterparts in the world. Or worse yet, we may experience our relationships with other Christians as being less loving and stable than the ones that we enjoy with others who do not know Christ.

Session One

Daily Exercise

We believe that it is. While engaging in this kind of spiritual, loving community may seem as mysterious as trying to create a piece of art, there are some simple practices that if we are willing to work to apply, can help us experience the Body of Christ growing itself up in love. This is The Art of Spiritual Leadership.

Humility and Hospitality

Everything we explore in The Art of Spiritual Leadership comes back to the values of humility and hospitality. When put into practice, these two attitudes of the heart are a means of God's transforming love. As you work to bring your leadership into conformity with humility and hospitality, we pray that you will enliven to a beautiful vision of what God can accomplish in people's lives through your leadership.

Margin notes like this draw connections between the training assignments and the leadership values of humility and hospitality.

Humility

The first value is humility. We believe that a heart posture of humility is essential to functioning in the Body of Christ and in leading others to love. We define humility as rightly understanding our place under the authority of God.

A humble person lives a life of dependence, looking for God's involvement in day-to-day activities and recognizing that everything is a gift from God. A humble attitude exhibits trust in the mystery that there is Someone bigger than us constantly working to mold us into the image of Christ. When leading others, humble leaders are primarily concerned with supporting the Spirit's work—not their own.

Our sessions will address how a humble attitude as leaders spurs us to look for the Holy Spirit's work in our lives and in the lives of those we lead. We desire leaders to submit to His authority as the True Leader and Guide. Leaders' receptivity to the Spirit allows them to see others through the eyes of Christ and love others because of Him. Leaders' capacity to relate with other Christians grows stronger as they learn to abide in spiritual commonalities, rather than relying on similarities in personality, background, ethnic heritage, or political ideology.

The heart posture of humility is underscored throughout the training in the Prayers of Humility, a habit of guided prayer practiced before and after each of your training group meetings. These prayers demonstrate what it looks like to rely on God in group ministry.

Hospitality

The second value at the core of this training is hospitality. One way of looking at leadership is through the lens of a host and his guests. When you lead a group, you are the host of your group members, and they are your guests. As a host, you have the privilege of creating an inviting space for others to feel accepted and involved. Great hospitality not only welcomes each group member, but also calls everyone's attention to the Lord's presence with the group as well.

The value of hospitality promotes love in very practical ways. Listening well, encouraging group sharing, and responding with grace all contribute to a hospitable group environment. Throughout *The Art of Spiritual Leadership*, you will have many opportunities to practice hospitality with your training group. You will also have time to brainstorm about how to adapt these skills to your leadership setting.

Learning through Hands-On Experience

The Art of Spiritual Leadership continually invites you to get involved. This isn't the kind of training where you can sit in the back of the room, listen to the lecture, and leave as soon as the teaching is over. This is hands-on training—where you get to field-test the tools, experiment with the ideas, and practice in the skills-lab.

In each session, we will invite you to...

- consider new, unfamiliar ideas
- embrace the challenge of more regular reflection and prayer
- engage in a model of dialogue with other leaders
- practice and workshop the skills of leadership

Daily Exercise

Hands-on training can be exciting, stretching, enlightening, and also frustrating. Learning to work with new ideas, especially when there are several new ideas in a row, can lead to feeling overwhelmed. If you find yourself feeling that way, pay attention to those feelings. Talk them over with God. Ask members of your group to come alongside you and pray with you.

Italicized call-outs like this provide creative and encouraging advice for the hands-on activities of the training. If you find yourself struggling to engage with an assignment, refer back to these call-outs to troubleshoot your experience.

Be kind to yourself. No one can master these concepts in just six sessions. The volume of information here can encourage a lifetime of practice, engagement, and growth. You have permission to try out this process, to risk having experiences that are outside your normal box, to trust God for something new and beautiful to be born in the midst of your willingness to experiment. That is all we can ask of any artist.

DAILY EXERCISE

The daily exercise is meant to take no more than 5 minutes per day. That may not seem like much at first, but we have found that returning to the same Scripture passage each day helps us make connections and experience the depth of God's Word. The following tips can help you make the most of this exercise:

- As you pray, jot down one sentence each day that encapsulates what you discovered.
- Set a timer for each question to keep you from spending too much or too little time on this exercise.
- If you skip a day, don't beat yourself up. Just pick up with your routine again the next day. God's mercies are new every morning.

In the days leading to your first group meeting, spend time envisioning with God what your group experience could be.

Every day, read Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21. Then, ask God the following questions and imagine with Him the possible answers.

For the first minute, prayerfully consider...

What would it look like if my group were "strengthened with power through God's Spirit in our inner being?"

For one minute, ponder...

How would we treat each other if my group were more "rooted and grounded in love?"

For one minute, reflect on...

What would we experience if we had "strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge?" What would be different?

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For the final minute, think on...

What would the world see if our group was "filled with all the fullness of God?"

End your prayer each day by asking God to do far more abundantly than you can think or imagine, both in your life as a leader and in your group.

Daily Exercise Notes

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The podcast is audio-only and provides the training content for each session. It typically runs 20 minutes in length and is the basis for the Reflect and Pray activity that follows. Use the provided outline as well as the note-taking space on the following page to record your thoughts or questions while listening.

You may find it difficult to concentrate on listening for 20 minutes. Use these tips to experiment and find a way of listening that works best for you.

- Find a place where you can easily focus—where you will have the fewest interruptions or distractions. This could be in your car during your commute to work, before you get out of bed, or in a comfy chair at home.
- Feel free to listen while you are doing another activity that engages your hands—like washing the dishes, cooking, or taking a shower—but that leaves your mind unoccupied so that you can listen.
- If you simply cannot focus, take that as an invitation from the Lord to talk with Him about what is grabbing your attention instead.

How to Access the Podcast

- 1. Go to www.graftedlife.org on your computer or mobile device and log in with an existing account or register a new account. You can create a free account using the "Member Login" menu on the main navigation bar.
- 2. From the account dashboard, click to "Add Online Content."
- 3. Input the following case-sensitive code: CNPUD5T3
- 4. Find Session One and stream the podcast online, or download the podcast for listening on your audio player.
- 5. Bookmark www.graftedlife.org/podcasts for quick access.

Reflect and Pray

Podcast Outline

The purpose of these podcasts is to stimulate prayer and conversation.

Daily Exercise

- God's vision for Christian community is that we would pursue spiritual unity and grow together in love.
 - We often expect too little of Christian community and forget it is a wonderful privilege.
 - b. True Christian community is marked by unity, maturity, stability, and love (Ephesians 4).
 - There are two points of focus that apply to any Christian gathering, regardless of their stated purpose.
- III. First point of focus: We ought to function as a spiritual community.
 - Spiritual community is Christians relating to one another on the basis of their connection to Jesus.
 - b. Jesus directs us to practice humility toward God and hospitality toward each other.
 - c. Acknowledging the Holy Spirit's activity in our relationships changes our disposition.
 - i. We stay united despite our differences.
 - We give up ultimate responsibility: the need to fix each other or be in charge.
 - iii. We become companions to each other on our journeys with God: through joys, grief, and fear.
 - iv. We are able to reconcile when we hurt or fail each other.
- IV. Second point of focus: We ought to accept all of our encounters in community as opportunities to grow in love.
 - We are called to love despite our own deficiencies and the deficiencies a. of others.
 - Practicing the skills of love is our first priority as Christians.
- V. The exercises in this study will help you participate in God's vision for Christian community as leaders.

Key Definitions

<u>Spiritual Community:</u> The body of Christians who are related to one another through the Person of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit sustains our community, dwelling with us and among us when we meet together. We do not perceive these realities through our physical senses but through spiritual awareness given to us by the Spirit of Christ (John 14:16-17, 25-26).

<u>Spiritual Leadership:</u> The process of leading others with awareness of and dependence on the presence and power of the Spirit of Christ.

<u>Humility (in Leadership)</u>: A posture of the heart that correctly understands one's alignment under the authority of God. Humble leaders seek to follow and depend on Jesus in all that they do, and encourage others to do the same through their words and example.

<u>Hospitality (in Leadership):</u> A posture of the heart that welcomes others in the grace of Jesus. Hospitable leaders create an environment where people are encouraged to come as they are and meet Jesus as He is.

Podcast Notes

REFLECT AND PRAY

Daily Exercise

These thematic reflections are an important aspect of The Art of Spiritual Leadership. They give you time to consider, process, and integrate the material you are learning into your leadership style. You choose the pace of these prayer times. They can last anywhere from twenty minutes to an hour; it depends on the duration and intensity with which you are able to engage in the material.

Complete the reflection sometime after you listen to the podcast, but before the group meeting. You can review the questions all in one sitting or break up the task over a couple of sittings.

- Resist completing each question by simply jotting down the first thing that pops into your head. Bring your thoughts into conversation with God as you write and think. We intend for you to grow in your awareness of God's presence with you as you answer these questions.
- Trust that God is with you at all times, even if you do not feel God's presence. Remembering this simple truth, no matter what we are feeling, can allow us to relate to God with focus and openness. Trust, too, that the Holy Spirit is always active in your life, for your good and for your growth.
- If at any time these questions seem a bit facile or even silly to you, we simply ask that you give it a try. Allow time for each question to interact with your thinking and feelings. Sometimes what seems obvious on the surface actually has hidden nuances.

Find a quiet place where you can spend several minutes reflecting on the following questions and sharing openly with God.

Begin by asking God to lead you and guide your thoughts. Remember that God is always with you and loves to be in relationship with you.

Continue on the next page...

Keep the following verse in mind as you answer the questions below:

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Consider: Your Expectations

What are your hopes for this training in spiritual leadership? What kind of leader do you desire to become as a result of this experience?

Do you have any resistance towards doing this training? What are you not looking forward to?

How else are you feeling, in general, about being involved in this training? Are you excited, skeptical, bored, anxious, bothered, intrigued, etc.? Are you just feeling flat about it? Write what you're honestly feeling.

Daily Exercise

There is a time commitment involved with this training. For each lesson, you will need to listen to a podcast, work through reflective exercises and questions, and participate and sometimes lead a gathering of other leaders. How will this new time commitment affect your life? What modifications will you need to make in order to participate in this training?

Whatever you have discovered about yourself through this exercise, are you willing to fully engage in this training as much as possible? Talk with God about the state of your willingness.

Humility balances our honest engagement with God with our willingness to be open to His will.

Take a moment and focus specifically on the group(s) that you are currently leading or a group that you have led or attended in the past. Regardless of the specific purpose for which your group meets, would you say that your group acts as a spiritual community to one another? In other words, does the group often remember God's presence and activity in their time together? How have they expressed this with each other? Have they tended to act otherwise?

As a leader, how good have you been at seeing spiritual realities in your group? Have you been able to recognize God's presence and actions during your group experiences and in each member individually? Write down whatever comes to mind.

Is growing in love already a part of your group's culture? How does your group tend to express love to one another? How have they struggled to do so and what was that like?

Consider: Your Hopes and Dreams

As a leader, what are your desires for your group? What are you hoping the members get from their experience together in the group?

Why do you think your group members come to the group? What do you think they are wanting to experience?

Hospitality involves being open to how other people experience things from their point of view.

If you could have the "perfect" group experience, what would that look like to you? How would such a group operate and feel? How would the people honor God and treat each other?

What is it like to contemplate this vision for community engagement in the church? Does it stir your heart? Are you weary of the idea? Does it just seem like an impossible pipe dream? Talk with God honestly about what you are thinking and how you are feeling.