

Selfless Leadership
Small Group Materials

Week 2: Relational Leadership

Warm-Up

1. What's one quality you admire in a great friend?
2. Share a memorable time when someone encouraged or supported you during a tough time.
3. If you could only pick one trait—patience, understanding, or empathy—to strengthen a relationship, which would it be and why?

Word

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” — Romans 15:4-7 (ESV)

A huge part of effective leadership is the authentic relationship that we are able to build with those we are leading and leading with. We are not just called to follow Jesus but to follow Him in a united and harmonious fellowship with each other. Here are biblical insights on effectively building deeper relationships with the people we are leading or leading with in our local church:

1. Relational Leaders Bear the Weaknesses of Others

“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.” —Romans 15:1

Effective leaders are relational leaders. They don't lord their strength over others; they use it to support and encourage those who are weak and

needing help and assistance. This reflects God’s patience and love for us. When we bear the weaknesses of others, they are encouraged to trust us and build with us as well.

(Share your story in response to this question as the leader of the group: What are the ways you saw your leader build with you relationally outside ministry roles? How are you learning to be present in the times that others become in need?)

2. Relational Leaders Seek Unity

“May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” —Romans 15:5-6

Effective Relational Leaders fight for the unity of our faith community. We aim to bring people together in harmony, glorifying God with one voice. Unity in relationships honors God and strengthens the church. When there are gossips or relational issues others seem to have, we stop the fire from spreading by carefully confronting them in love and truth and inspire them to seek restoration and growth in their own walks with God and other believers.

(Share your story in response to this question as the leader of the group: Have you ever encountered divisive people at work or in church? Share how you usually handle them. What does God’s Word tell us about properly handling them?)

3. Welcome Others as Christ Welcomed Us

“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” —Romans 15:7

Christ’s acceptance of us, despite our flaws, is the model for how we should build relationships—with grace, love, and understanding. The church is a place for imperfect people being perfected by the gospel of Jesus Christ. In the church community we learn to sit in the tensions, in the mess and in the troubles our people are going through. We grieve with those who grieve and rejoice with those who rejoice. We will continue to keep relationships long-term because it is where God’s grace flows all the more and shapes us to become more like Jesus.

(Share your story in response to this question as the leader of the group: How were you welcome in the church community? What made you feel so accepted and belonged in this local church?)

Application

1. What’s one way you can “bear the weaknesses” of someone close to you this week?
2. How can you promote unity in a group or relationship you’re part of?
3. How does Christ’s example of welcoming others challenge the way you build relationships?

Prayer

1. Pray for grace to bear with others’ weaknesses with patience and love.
2. Ask God to help you foster unity in your relationships and community.
3. Thank God for His unconditional acceptance and pray for the strength to reflect that in your interactions.