

# The Importance of Prayer as a Leader

## Leader Huddle Discussion Guide

### Ice Breaker:

- What has consistently spending time with God looked like in your best seasons of doing so?

### Teaching: Your Most Important Job as a Small Group Leader

Jim Egli, the small groups pastor at a Vineyard church in Illinois, had a question: What's the most important part of leading a small group?

To answer that question, he completed a Ph.D. degree and did extensive statistical research involving over 3,000 small group leaders in more than 200 churches. Obviously, he *really* wanted to know.

So what did he find?

He found that the single most important dimension of leading a group is your prayer life – your connection to God as a leader.

Egli and his research partner investigated all sorts of aspects of small groups, asking their respondents questions about group dynamics, leadership behaviors, and group meetings. But they found that the health and growth of a group are tied most closely to the unseen dimension of a group leader's relationship with God.

The biggest results came from leaders' answers to these questions:

- How consistently do you take time for prayer and Bible reading?
- Are you praying daily for your non-Christian friends to come to know Jesus?
- How many days in the past week did you pray for your small group members?
- Do you pray for your group meetings in the days leading up to it?
- How much time on average do you spend in daily prayer and Bible reading?

Those leaders with a strong relationship with God – as indicated by their answers to these questions – led small groups which experienced a deeper level of care between members and had a clearer sense of mission beyond the group. They also raised up more leaders and generated more new groups. And the greatest difference was in evangelistic impact -- such leaders' groups were four times likelier to see people brought to Christ through the influence of the group than groups led by leaders with a weaker prayer life.

You may think you may need to spend more time preparing for your small group discussion or touching base with your members outside group or organizing social activities or service projects. And that may be true.

But don't neglect your prayer life. Your relationship with God will have more impact on your group than anything else you do.

To learn more, check out: <http://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2010/small-group-leaders-most-important-job.html?paging=off>

### **Discussion Questions:**

- What are your answers to the five questions above?
- What has been your biggest impediment to spending time with God on a consistent basis? How could you (or how have you) overcome it?
- What are one or two practical things you can start doing to improve your prayer life?
- What advice would you give to a new Christian who is just beginning to develop a prayer life?