



Seven Mistakes of New Neighborhood Group Leaders

And how to avoid them when you're in the hot seat
1 Corinthians 3:6-7

God is not looking for “perfect performance,” but for hearts that want to love Him and others.

7 Mistakes

1. Not Being Yourself

- a. Authenticity is the key to success as a neighborhood group leader. People won't put up for long with a neighborhood group where people aren't genuine with each other
- b. The greatest influence on the authenticity within a neighborhood group is how authentic the neighborhood group leader acts within the group.
- c. Confess sins and admit faults. Don't try to project an image of perfection.
- d. Ask for help when when times are tough.

*The health of the neighborhood group is directly linked to the degree of freedom that members have to be themselves, **and that starts with the leader.***

Note: People want to go someplace where they are **loved for who they are** rather than who they **feel they have to be**. People follow the lead of the neighborhood group leader in this way more than you realize. Demonstrated vulnerability from leadership has tremendous “**imprinting power**” that can ensure the health of the group for the life of the group.

2. Trying to do it alone

The **biggest** preventable mistake made by neighborhood group leaders comes when they try to carry too much, the “I'll just do it myself” syndrome.

There are three main ways this happens:

- I. Not identifying an assistant leader
 - a. We must follow the examples of Jesus and the apostle Paul by developing assistant leaders to help us do ministry (Luke 6:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:2). the impact of your leadership is increased tremendously with the support of assistant leaders.
 - b. They lighten your load and provide backup and perspective
 - c. other leaders are needed if a group plans to manage their growth multiplying so that more people can be reached and included

- II. Not asking individuals within the group to take ownership of different aspects of the community group's life.

Note: Neighborhood Group leaders can save a lot of time and mental energy by finding an administratively-gifted member to take care of follow-up phone calls, contact information, and tracking birthdays and anniversaries.

- III. Not facilitating discussions. Group leaders can fall into a trap when they think of themselves as teachers or one who has to become an expert on a subject and then create an interesting and educational "lesson" for each group meeting. Instead, group leaders should view themselves as facilitators. They need to be prepared, yes, but the entire burden for working through a curriculum should never rest on one set of shoulders.

3. Not Loving Neighbors Outside of the Group

- a. It is natural for a Neighborhood Group to become self-focused if you aren't intentional about creating a culture of loving your neighbors outside of the group.
- b. A self centered group becomes ineffective not only in discipleship, but also in evangelism (Matthew 28:19-20).
- c. If the community-group leader is not deliberate about nurturing an outward focus to the group, community weakens and eventually the group implodes.
- d. A simple way for a group to start becoming more outwardly focused is to *intentionally pray for the unsaved neighbors of group members*

4. The Need to Finish Bad Curriculum

Sometimes small group curriculum kills small groups. Here's a rule of thumb: if something is not working, end it and move on to something else.

I recommend avoiding community group curriculum that:

- 1. Requires a lot of "homework,"
- 2. That has lots of leading questions and fill-in-the-blanks.

Instead, look for curriculum that:

- a. engages people's minds
- b. encourages interaction
- c. builds relationships

5. Failure to be Creative

- a. Don't lose your creative edge when leading a neighborhood group. Keep things fresh.
- b. Be spontaneous in changing your group's routine.
- c. Be sure to have social outings together that are just for fun
- d. Find ways to mix things up with each new season.

6. Being Inflexible

There's no schedule you have to keep, so take the time to let your group members love on each other instead of rigidly trying to stick with a pre planned agenda.

Example, when members are going through a **hard season**, your group should take the time to **stop, listen, and pray** for them. When crises come, call an emergency meeting. Or cancel an existing meeting to celebrate a triumph. By allowing for a natural ebb and flow to when and how your group gathers, you build its resiliency and create an organic structure that fits in with your participants' lives. In turn, they'll sense what you're doing, appreciate it, and make more room in their lives for the group.

7. Not Knowing What Makes Your Neighborhood Group Special

As a leader, it's vital that you take the time to learn who is in your group.

This starts with your first gathering learn about those who came. Here are some questions keep in mind for each group member:

- Who are they? What are their personal passions, professions, and other interests?
- How long have they been at the church?
- What are they hoping to get from the neighborhood group?

This first conversation influences the way in which your group engages with you and the lesson or study. Always be listening to what people have to say and where they're at spiritually.

Remember the basic principle:

- a. Your neighborhood group will be healthy when people feel loved.
- b. It **isn't** all up to you as the leader, but you are the primary catalyst.
- c. Don't forget about God. A Neighborhood Group leader is the person who takes the lead in creating and maintaining an environment where biblical community can thrive, but it's God who does the growing.

(1 Corinthians 3:6-7). ⁶ "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase ⁷. So then neither he who plants is anything. Nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase."