

STEVE – AUGUST 2010

Create Leadership with Intention and Focus

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by Steve Gladen

On Friday night August 13th, we had a Gathering for our infrastructure of the Small Group Community for Saddleback Church. It is called our Community Leader Gathering. We had over 350 Community Leaders in attendance (our CLs oversee our Small Group Leaders). Later this fall, we will have our Gathering for the Small Group Leaders (we use the term Hosts). That Gathering is called our Small Group Host Gathering. In case you didn't get a chance to read it, check out my past article on the purpose and importance of Gatherings [here](#). As I reflect on our most recent gathering, I am reminded of ten leadership points that need to be in place for such a gathering. I will share them with you in this article.

Listen to the August Community Leader Gathering.

Leadership points:

1. Ask others to help. Whether your small group ministry is small or large, you need others to help you pull off a gathering. If you don't ask, others won't know the need. I have found that leaders often have the same two reasons for not asking: They are afraid no one can do the job as well as they can and they don't want to "bother" people. First, you are right; no one will do it as well as you (or at least not exactly as you would have)! However, there is only one you. So, if you want your ministry to grow, you have to empower others. They might not do it just as you would have, but they also might have a unique contribution that you would have never thought of. When you ask people to get involved from their area of giftedness, you are not bothering them, but recharging and energizing them. You are giving them the opportunity to use their God-given abilities and gifts. Such an opportunity will not "bother" them, but will provide them with a sense of purpose and gratitude for you having placed your trust in them.

2. Have courage. When you are doing a gathering, it is natural to wonder, will anyone come? Will people find this a blessing or burden? Every time we do a Gathering I have to dig deep and find the courage to do what I know is right. A million things are going on in everyone's lives, and yes, your Gathering is another one of those things. But a Gathering is critical to the health of your Small Group Ministry. Health will not just magically happen in your Small Group Ministry. As the Leader, you need to take charge and create a gathering that will help your people to go to the next level.

3. Don't over think. Plan, bring your best, and God will make up the difference. Do you have to plan, yes! Will everything go according to plan, no! Fortunately, the Holy Spirit has a way of taking our best and

accomplishing God's plan for the Gathering. If I sat down with the team and thought through every detail, it would give us all a headache. Just know that while the event is happening, God will do his part.

4. Include families. We always invite spouses to come to our Gatherings. Learning about each other's family and making the connection personally is a powerful way to show you care. It also gives you the chance to thank the spouses for all their behind the scenes support. If a prayer request comes up while you are having a personal conversation, be sure to pray right then for their need. Be sure to include some informal time for chatting before and after the event. This is a great time to meet the spouses.

5. Encourage and support. As the Gathering happens, I am amazed at all the people I get a chance to develop through encouragement, relationship building, thanking, appreciating, etc. Every time you see a person, it is an opportunity to develop them through your words. Don't miss the opportunity.

6. Help them see the bigger picture. Give your leaders a chance to see something larger than the groups they oversee. For those of you who have multi-sites, bringing your regional campuses together is a powerful way for everyone to see the big picture. For those of you with a single site, this is a great opportunity for your leaders to network and meet other leaders in the church.

7. Recruit new leaders. We encourage our leaders to bring those who are next in line for leadership. Now, those next in line may or may not know they are next in line! A Gathering is a powerful time to expose new people to the bigger vision of where your Small Group Ministry is going. It will be a tipping point for those people to get involved. Make sure you also use the Gathering as an opportunity to acknowledge your leaders. We usually acknowledge those who are new within the last year, veteran leaders, and those potential leaders just checking us out for the evening. Every Gathering is an opportunity to recruit more leaders.

8. Cast vision with your Senior Pastor. If at all possible, be sure to include your Senior Pastor. Your leadership team needs to hear how important small groups are; not just from you, but also from your Senior Pastor. This shows unity in the church and is a huge source of motivation and inspiration to your leaders. If you have an upcoming fall campaign, this is also a great chance to cast vision for that campaign and move together in a strategic manner.

9. Transitions are critical. Gatherings are a great time to acknowledge transitions that are happening. In a church, there are always some transitions happening. In leadership there could be transitions, key people moving, a new course for where the church is going, news on your team, etc. Gatherings are a good time to catch people up and honor those worthy of being honored. Even though you may communicate in multiple ways, doing some things publically is a huge leadership win. During the program transitions are critical too! Think through how each person or component comes on the stage and exits the stage.

10. Never just do an event. We never do an event just for the event's sake. It always points to next hill or objective for us. The purpose of this latest Gathering was to align the infrastructure for the Fall and ensure that the Community Leaders bring their Small Group Leaders (Hosts) to the upcoming Host Gathering on Friday October 8th . Now that the Community Leaders have seen how powerful their Gathering was, they want their Hosts to have the same sort of experience.

Everything rises and falls on leadership. Make the most of the opportunities God places before you to make your Small Group Ministries healthier and more effective.