

Leading a Frontline Hub*

** A hub is a set of
two to four community groups
connected geographically
for (1) more efficient mission
(2) more effective pastoral care
and (3) more exact equipping*



Male Hub Leader Job Description

1. Slowly build friendships over time with the male community group leaders in your hub, as you coach, develop, and shepherd them.
2. With the female hub leader, collaboratively schedule, plan, and lead two hub leadership gatherings each year—one at the beginning of each semester (for a detailed description, see page 3).
3. Meet with each male community group leader every other month for coaching, discipleship, and pastoral care. On alternating months, connect by phone. Listen deeply, encourage frequently, and pray for them on the spot.
4. Aim to meet with the congregational community director once a semester for strategic planning, coaching, friendship, and vision-alignment.
5. Visit each of your community groups once a semester—once between January and June and once between August and December.
6. Take initiative to work collaboratively with, invite input from, and keep open lines of communication with, the Female Hub Leader. (Gender-redeeming male servant leadership in the home and in the local church should not assume that it is superior. Rather, it should assume that it should take initiative. Therefore, the male hub leader should take initiative to regularly empower the female hub leader, enlist her wisdom and her counsel, and work collaboratively with her for the health of the hub as a whole.)

Female Hub Leader Job Description

1. Slowly build friendships over time with the female community group leaders in your hub, as you coach, develop, and shepherd them.
2. With the male hub leader, collaboratively schedule, plan, and lead two hub leadership gatherings each year—one at the beginning of each semester (for a detailed description, see page 3).
3. Meet with each female community group leader every month for coaching, discipleship, and pastoral care. Listen deeply, encourage frequently, and pray for them on the spot.
4. Aim to meet with the congregational community director once a semester for strategic planning, coaching, friendship, and vision-alignment.
5. Visiting each of your community groups once a semester—once between January and June and once between August and December—is welcomed but not required.



Three Areas of Responsibility on a Hub Leadership Team

Frontline believes in team ministry at every level of leadership, but the inherent plurality of the elder community can be unintentionally individualized in some ways by assigning an elder or elder-in-development to oversee a hub alone. In order to prevent that kind of isolated leadership, the following three areas of responsibility are recommended for healthy team leadership of a hub.

1. The **male hub leader** is the primary leader of the hub and the hub leadership team, who (1) casts vision, (2) coaches, and (3) provides pastoral care for the people in the hub, with particular focus on the primary male leaders of each community group, but not to the exclusion of female group leaders or group members, as needs arise.
2. The **female hub leader** is the primary provider of Titus 2 mentoring, shepherding, and coaching to female community group leaders within the hub. The female hub leader is also encouraged to coordinate any form of occasional hub-wide discipleship and equipping of women as she and the male hub leader might deem beneficial at any given time.
3. The **hub coordinator** or **hub deacon** assists the male and female hub leaders with communication, administration, and hub-wide missional engagement—leading the hub into larger missional opportunities that address key needs in that part of the city (see the *Missional Gatherings Rhythm Sheet* for further guidance). The hub coordinator will also serve as an expert on, and liaison with, congregation-specific city partners, as well as function as a “deacon at large” as care needs arise within the hub.

If the male and female hub leaders primarily *serve by leading*, hub coordinators or hub deacons primarily *lead by serving*. (In fact, this role could serve as a segment in the diaconate pipeline, and would ideally be increasingly filled by installed deacons, who serve in all the ways described above.) A hub deacon is able to respond to a broad range of unpredictable and ongoing needs that will inevitably arise within a hub rather than being assigned to a pre-existing task within a congregation. Once installed as a deacon, an existing hub coordinator’s title would then change to hub deacon.

These **three areas of responsibility** could conceivably be carried out by **as few as two people** (provided the female hub leader has the unique capacity and gifting to provide both Titus 2 mentoring and a measure of administrative and missional support), or **as many as four people**, where the hub coordination efforts are divided between an **administrator** and a **missional coordinator** as hub needs increase. Each of these three areas of responsibility are primed for **apprenticeship**, and male and female hub leaders as well as hub coordinators should be alert and diligent to include other people in the hub in their ministry efforts—both for the sake of developing leaders as well as sharing the ministry load.



Hub Leadership Gatherings

What is the goal? The primary goal is *to know each other well enough to pray for each other on the spot*. But other purposes that support or compliment that primary goal are:

- To regather and relaunch leaders after the breaks in December and July
- To take stock of both the past semester as well as the one that's beginning
- To check in and share how we are doing—both personally and ministerially
- To honor and encourage each other
- To model to our group leaders what a healthy family meal rhythm looks like

When should we schedule them? We ask every male and female hub leader to work together and make a plan to gather the leaders in their hub at the beginning of each semester—once in August and once in January, for a total of two hub leadership gatherings a year.

Who should we invite? Hub leaders should invite both primary and assistant community group leaders, as well as any apprentices or other potential/future leaders that both the hub leaders and respective group leaders agree should be invited. When we include potential/future leaders in spaces like a hub gathering, we give them a view into Frontline's leadership culture, which often surprises them with its emphasis on vulnerable sharing and prayer, and using ministry to get people done instead of the other way around. Assure potential/future leaders that attendance does not equal commitment.

What are the logistics? Sometimes a community director has funds set aside to help defray the cost of preparing the meal. Other times, the hub leaders coordinate a potluck instead of preparing the whole meal themselves. Still others opt for a later start time and provide drinks and dessert instead of a full meal. Community group leaders should be encouraged to secure childcare for themselves so they can focus on sharing and prayer without interruption. Hub leadership gatherings typically last two to two-and-a-half hours, counting: informal time connecting, eating together, checking in and sharing, and prayer.

What should be the format? Hub leadership gatherings are usually best hosted in a home—either a hub leader's home, or if that's not ideal or available, one of the community group leaders' homes. Sometimes due to space constraints, or other limitations, hub leaders will use their congregation's building.

Every community group leader should have the opportunity to check in. Future/prospective leaders can listen in, and don't have to necessarily check in. If there are too many people for every individual to share, hub leaders can ask married leaders to designate one person to share on behalf of their household.

Alternately, leaders can be invited to share and check in on behalf of the whole



leadership team of their respective community group, and then the floor can be opened up for anyone else who would like to check in or share something that is burdening them individually.

Hub leaders can update leaders on any upcoming church-wide or congregation-specific strategic initiatives, or make general comments about hub-wide patterns of strength or weakness they've observed in the past semester as it relates to engaging in the three rhythms: family meal, discipleship groups, and missional gatherings.

However, since the primary goal is to listen to and know each other well enough to pray for each other on the spot, make sure plenty of time is left for prayer. Hub leaders should remain sensitive to the Spirit's leading, and draw out or highlight anyone they feel needs the attention or prayers of the group. Tears, strong emotions, weariness, or discouragement are often (but not always) a clue for where to focus attention. You can't do this for everyone in attendance due to time constraints, but as you feel prompted, invite at least one or two people to sit in a chair placed in the center of the room, and facilitate a time of prophetic prayer on their behalf. (Learn more about how to facilitate a time of prophetic prayer at frontlinechurch.com/propheticprayer.)



Learn to ask the 2 most basic life questions¹

1) What are you facing?

First, what is this person facing in life?

2) How does the Lord connect?

Second, what does the Lord say that speaks directly into what they are facing?

¹ These questions are drawn from an article by David Powlison entitled “What Questions Does a Biblical Counselor Suggest We Ask?” which is attached to this packet.



Learn to ask the 6 most basic coaching questions²

- 1) **How are you doing?** Beginning with this question sets a tone of relationship and care, rather than simply getting down to business. The answer to this question also helps you to know what tenor to take in the conversation. If someone is discouraged, then you can focus on encouraging them in the gospel. If someone is neutral, use it as an opportunity to inspire them. If someone is really doing well, then use the conversation to challenge them provide some new direction.
- 2) **What are you celebrating?** Listening to the answer to this question helps you understand two things. First, it helps you identify and encourage the leader in what things are currently going well. Secondly, what people celebrate tends to indicate what they value. If an individual consistently talks through the excellency of relationships within the group, but rarely celebrates outsiders participating in community, they likely value intimate relationships above mission.
- 3) **What challenges are you facing?** This question also gives two perspectives on the individual and the group. First, where sinners gather, there are always challenges. If there isn't a response to this, or they are consistently shallow challenges, it is likely the group isn't pursuing the vision for community groups and discipleship groups particularly well. Second, this question is also indicative to where there are misplaced values within the community. If "dealing with children" is consistently a challenge, it's likely that there is an overemphasis on the meeting and a lack of valuing demonstration of a missional community to children.
- 4) **What are you doing about those challenges?** This question is vital because you first want the leader to address the challenges on their own and present creative solutions before the coach chimes in. Ownership in leadership is expressed through problem solving—resist the temptation to solve problems for a leader!
- 5) **How can I help you?** This questions helps you respond in a constructive way and meet any needs of the leader or the community. It is also an opportunity to listen for both the strengths and weaknesses of the leader. If they are consistently requesting articles or books, it's likely they are a learner and predominantly lead through teaching, for example.
- 6) **How can I pray for you?** Finally, you can care best for a leader by committing to and following up with prayer. (It's especially important to do right on the spot.) Additionally, this question helps identify particular areas of concern that the leader has which may not be skill-based issues. Often here is where a leader will reveal a deep issue that is plaguing their community or express concern for an issue that needs to be addressed by an elder or pastor. This conversation pattern will be tremendously helpful for us in coaching community group leaders, leading ministry teams, and in many circumstances where we're just getting to know someone. It isn't foolproof, but it's a really helpful template to follow!

² This is adapted from a conversation template originally created by Todd Engstrom of *The Austin Stone Community Church*) that we have found to be helpful for coaching leaders.



*I would not give a fig for the simplicity this side of complexity,
but I would give my life for the simplicity on the other side of complexity.*

Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr.



- * If you remember nothing else as you walk alongside leaders, remember this. If you are careful to listen to them deeply, encourage them meaningfully, and pray for them diligently, you'll be fulfilling the heart of coaching.



Follow the 10 principles of fruitful coaching

- 1) In every interaction, make it your aim to: (1) listen, (2) encourage, and (3) pray.
- 2) **Treat them holistically**, by addressing not only (1) their ministerial needs, but also (2) their physical needs, and (3) their spiritual needs. We want to use ministry to get people done, rather than using people to get ministry done.
- 3) In every interaction, aim for the heart—move the conversation one step deeper.
- 4) Call them to obedience to Jesus.
- 5) Call them to joy in Jesus.
- 6) **Uniquely equip them, in their individuality, to do the work of the ministry.** Do they know what their spiritual gifts are? Do you? Are they fanning them into flame? Are you helping them to that end?
- 7) **Take what you know and prayerfully process it.** Take notes, and prayerfully review them before subsequent meetings. Tell yourself, “Let me make sure I know this person first.” Then ask, “What is one thing (as opposed to ten action steps) that this person should get hold of?”
- 8) **Be a subversive and move beyond the leader’s felt needs.** Love consumers, but confront consumerism, and expect change. We want to disciple the people of God to own the mission of God.
- 9) Regularly consider your own heart and life story.
- 10) Notice small steps, and recommend and agree on small steps. And then follow up.



Regularly stop and evaluate the health of the relationship

It is important to regularly stop and take stock of your relationship with each leader for whom you are providing coaching and care. Ask yourself:

- Does your relationship with each leader increasingly feel like a friendship? Are you enjoying each other? Are you growing in your ability to trust each other?
- Would you feel comfortable if you had to say something hard to them?
- Are the phone calls or face-to-face meetings intentional, and building on previous conversations? Are they moving beyond merely a “check-in,” and starting to sound like discipleship? Are you regularly praying together on the spot?
- Are you starting to get a feel for where they need to grow spiritually, and how you will walk alongside them in that process?
- Are you increasingly personal? Do you feel an increasing godly love for each leader? Do you feel increasing care and affection for them as individual people made in the image of God? Are you affected and moved by their sins and sorrows? Do you sense yourself increasingly caring *about* them even as you care *for* them?



The 10 principles for fruitful coaching, unpacked

This is an attempt to assemble a list of intangibles that are often, but not always, found in coaching that bears fruit. Many of you have probably noticed that we can be faithful in discipling or coaching a fellow believer—consistently meeting with them and dutifully inquiring about them—but still not see in them the kind of spiritual growth which we would hope to see over time.

It is possible for our coaching to be faithful, but not necessarily fruitful.

Sometimes this is simply because the person with whom we are walking alongside is unwilling to do the things necessary to grow. Sometimes they actually don't want to grow. Sometimes God in his mysterious purposes does not see fit to answer our prayers or theirs in regards to the pace at which we'd like to see them progress, or the amount of ground we'd like to see them cover.

All Christians go through seasons where their progress in sanctification feels more like crawling than walking or running. But sometimes (certainly not always) faithfulness without fruitfulness can be due to our neglect of one or several of these coaching intangibles—things that can make a big difference, but that are often subtle, and possibly not named or noticed either when absent or even when present.

In other words, sometimes we're coaching in ways that bear fruit, but we're doing it intuitively and wouldn't necessarily be able to put into words what we're doing in such a way that other aspiring coaches could learn from or imitate us.

Here is an attempt towards that end...

- We must diligently add three ingredients to as many interactions with our leaders as possible. They are: (1) **listening**, (2) **encouragement** and affirmation, and (3) **prayer**. Most of us talk too much and listen too little. We end up being light on compassion and quick to give advice. It's been well said that the same verse of Scripture which falls flat when shared at minute five, if shared at minute *fifty-five*, can turn the lights on in a leader's heart. Further, Ed Welch reminds us to constantly ask ourselves if we're mingling our coaching with words of encouragement and affirmation. Lastly, when we merely talk about or refer to prayer, instead of stopping to pray for a leader on the spot, we empty much of the power out of our coaching conversations. Even when we do remember to pray, there can be a perfunctory, transactional quality to our prayer, where we subtly reduce prayer to a way of "landing the plane" by wrapping up the meeting on a spiritual high note. But when our prayer emerges from listening to the other person, while simultaneously listening to God, and when our prayers are energized by compassion, prompted by the Spirit, and infused with Scripture, they will become an increasingly powerful means of ministering to the needs of our leaders. *Take a moment and rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, how consistently and skillfully you practice each of these three rhythms in your coaching conversations (i.e., listen, encourage, pray). Take note of*



which of the three you gave yourself the lowest score on. How might you intentionally practice and consequently grow in that particular skill?

- Fruitful coaches are vigilant to **holistically address (1) personal, (2) spiritual, and (3) ministerial needs** of leaders in their care. It has been well said that our goal is to **use ministry to get people done, rather than using people to get ministry done**. We should make it our aim that whenever someone decides to lead a community group, we pastor them in such a way that in hindsight they end up pointing back to their decision to lead as one of the greatest contributions to their spiritual growth that they've ever received!
- Fruitful coaching is primarily concerned to pastor the heart of the leader towards greater reliance on, delight in, and obedience to, Jesus. What the leader is believing and desiring (their heart) will inevitably be expressed in what they do and say. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt 12:34). Therefore, fruitful coaches "**aim for the heart**" in every conversation. In all our conversations with leaders, we should always make it our aim to **move the conversation one step deeper**—inching ever closer to matters of the heart. What are they believing and desiring? Thinking and wanting? How are their beliefs and desires being revealed in what they're doing and saying? Because fruitful coaching is heart-centered, it is also necessarily hedonistic. The heart is the seat of our desires, and therefore fruitful coaches seek to entice leaders with promises of the deeper delight that can be found in Jesus, rather than try and drive leaders with a sense of duty divorced from delight. Fruitful coaches **call leaders to obedience to Jesus** because fruitful coaches truly believe that in so doing they **call leaders to joy in Jesus**.
- Fruitful coaching seeks to **uniquely equip each leader to do the work of the ministry** (Eph 4:11-16). Does this leader sitting in front of you know what their spiritual gifts are? If they do, are they fanning them into flame (2 Tim 1:6)? Are they learning how to exercise them in increasingly edifying and skillful ways?
- Fruitful coaching is done intentionally and "on purpose." Fruitful coaches **leave nothing to chance**.
 - Leaving nothing to chance will require that most coaches take notes, capture information, and refer back to it as a means of better walking alongside, and "keeping up with their story." Coaches should approach subsequent meetings with a c-group leader with an increasingly clear change agenda for that leader.
 - Leaving nothing to chance requires coaches to proactively pursue c-group leaders, even when those leaders act like or even say that "everything is fine." Leaving nothing to chance requires coaches to be constantly asking "What does spiritual growth and change look like in this leader's life, this year, and how am I called to walk alongside them well in that movement from where they are to where Jesus wants them to go?"
 - This kind of change agenda doesn't just emerge out of the blue, but is instead the by-product of note-taking, thoughtful reflection after conversations, prayer, and carefully deciding what should be addressed in subsequent meetings. This will require, in the



words of Ed Welch, that we know how to both (1) recommend and (2) notice small steps.

- Leaving nothing to chance will require that we grow increasingly aware of our particular tendencies and weaknesses—particularly as it relates to being either primarily a “hinge” person or a “door” person. David Powlison explains: Half of us are really good at creating doorways. “Door” people tend to be really good at loving and knowing the other person, but they don’t know how to turn the doorknob. They know tons of things and they really care, but they don’t know where to go. The questions they ask don’t have a direction. They tend to gravitate towards community group leadership. The other half of us are really good with “hinges.” There are no doors, no curiosity for greater context, no real reason to want to listen. They see right and wrong, they see some of the choice points, etc., but the talk doesn’t build on the right foundation. They tend to be the pastors and seminarians in the church. If you are a “door” person then it would be worthwhile to **take what you know and process it**. There is a discipline to organizing what you hear and see, and to set goals. If you are a “hinge” person, it might be worthwhile as a discipline in your conversation to *bracket* what you are going to say. **“Let me make sure I know this person first.” “What is one thing (as opposed to ten action steps) that this person should get hold of?”**
- Our c-group leaders are called to be “subversives,” as Eugene Peterson says, and so fruitful coaches also must **be subversives**, pastoring and equipping every leader to be a subversive. What do I mean by “subversive?” Peterson explains:

Most... suppose that the goals they have for themselves and the goals God has for them are the same. It is the oldest religious mistake: refusing to countenance any real difference between God and us, imagining God to be a vaguely imagined extrapolation of our own desires, and then hiring a priest to manage the affairs between self and the extrapolation. And I, one of the priests they hired, am having none of it. But if I'm not willing to help them become what they want to be, what am I doing taking their pay? I am being subversive. I am undermining the kingdom of self and establishing the kingdom of God. I am helping them to become what God wants them to be, using the methods of subversion.

Fruitful coaches **move beyond the leader’s felt needs**, and seek to also address deep needs that aren't necessarily felt by the leader, but are needs nonetheless (e.g. the need to grow in enjoyment of God, the need to feed on the Word daily, the need to grow in dependent prayer and sensitivity to the Spirit, the need to grow in steadfast endurance of suffering for the sake of joy, etc.).

People come to these groups for many different reasons and with many different expectations, and our leaders must subvert and redirect their felt needs towards Christ's agenda for them. Todd Engstrom has described this as “meeting people where they are, and taking them where Jesus wants them to go.” In other words, as Engstrom goes on to



explain, we must **love consumers, but confront consumerism, and expect change**. We must know the cultural idols that rule and reign in our city, and we must know how to subvert those, and then point to Jesus as the only hope.

Fruitful coaches are always asking themselves how they can be equipping their leaders to gently confront people's lack of commitment that hurts the health of the group. How do we equip leaders to gently re-educate their people that Jesus is not their therapist, and community is not a place to merely “consider their own needs in the presence of others,” in the words of Robert Wuthnow? In short, we must increasingly **disciple the people of God to own the mission of God**.

- *More counsel from Ed Welch:* To be fruitful coaches we must **consider our own hearts and life stories**. As a hub leader, can you make the connection between the details of your daily life and your relationship with the Lord? Your daily life—your work and relationships—gives you an accurate read on your relationship with Jesus. Ask yourself:
 - How are your best relationships? Your worst relationships?
 - How are your spiritual disciplines?
 - How are you growing in your battle with sin? Can you identify sin in your own life?
 - Do you ask for help? When is the last time you asked someone to pray for you, and then actually let them pray for you on the spot?
 - Do you encourage other people to do things you don't do? In other words, if you ask them to begin meditating on Scripture, do you yourself meditate on Scripture? If we're going to ask them to do something we haven't done, then we should say “we.” “We will memorize and meditate on one Scripture together this week.”
 - How are you growing in the way you turn to Jesus in the midst of suffering and hardship? In Hosea 7:14 the Lord accuses the Israelites in this way: *They do not cry to me from the heart, but they wail upon their beds...*
 - What are your weaknesses or common mistakes in everyday conversation? *Take a moment to jot down perhaps one strength and two weaknesses.*
 - Again, do you **notice small steps**? Do you **recommend and agree on small steps**? Are you mingling your conversation with words of encouragement and comfort?





Visiting a community group

CHECKLIST

- ✓ **Call ahead.** In partnership with the community group leaders, select a date to attend their group, with the goal of connecting, observing, and giving feedback. (If you're finding it difficult to nail down a time with a particular set of leaders, pay attention to that dynamic of anxiety. Ask good questions and listen carefully. Perhaps the leaders are overwhelmed. Perhaps they are embarrassed to have you visit their group. Perhaps from a previous church they carry authoritarian notions of pastoral presence, and are anxious about your visit's effect on the group.)
- ✓ **Attend the group as a “fly on the wall.”** Remember that you are not there to lead the group—resist the urge to take over. That doesn't mean you should be cold or aloof. Be warm and encouraging. Move towards people and greet them. Ask questions and listen. Look for tangible things you can affirm. Be quick to encourage and praise. Cultivate a peaceful, pastoral, and prayerful presence. (The primary male hub leader's spouse and/or the female hub leader are welcome and encouraged to participate in group visits, but are not required to participate.)
- ✓ **Schedule a follow-up conversation.** After the group visit, meet with the group leaders—preferably in person—to debrief and share encouragement, areas to grow, blind spots, etc. This allows you to “strike while the iron is cold,” by giving you time to prayerfully organize and prioritize your feedback (e.g., instead of pointing out ten things, what's one thing they could work on right now?), as well as helping the leaders more easily receive any needed correction. Thoughtfully visiting the groups in your hub will automatically increase your level of skill and insight, as you will no longer be attempting to coach your leaders on the basis of their verbal description of their group alone. Instead, you will be able to coach your leaders on the basis of an experience you yourself have shared with them.

DIAGNOSTIC QUESTIONS³

In seeking to measure the health of a group, consider the following kinds of questions:

1. **Is the purpose of the group clearly understood by the leaders and the members?** Is the purpose regularly being mentioned within the group? One of the main reasons people drop out of community is that they lack a clear sense of purpose. Attendance problems can often be accounted for by a failure to communicate the purpose of the group to the members or a failure to achieve the communicated purpose. When the purpose of the group is known and clearly articulated it not only affects the way in which the leader leads, it also affects the expectations, attitudes and actions of the group members.

³ A portion of this material is adapted from the *Fellowship Group Handbook*, Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Version 2.0, 1997.



2. **What is the quality of the group's prayer life?** A group which is maturing in prayer will find that its prayer is kingdom-focused—centered on God's purposes and their accomplishment. Even personal prayer requests will have God's glory as their chief concern. The group will also be praying for the ministries of the church. The prayer life of the group ought not to be always and only self-focused, or else it will become ingrown over time.
3. **Do you sense that people in the group are growing into spiritual maturity?** What is the evidence for this? Groups do not meet just for the sake of meeting. Community group can quickly become a place to merely hide in plain sight. Gospel community exists in order to enable us to better love God, love people, and push back darkness. Nothing changes if nothing changes. With some reflection, you ought to be able to point to particular ways in which individuals are growing, inch by inch, into the likeness of Christ.
4. **Is the group growing as a spiritual family?** When a group is growing in their sense of belonging to one another a number of things will be happening. Individuals will feel a sense of responsibility for one another. They will be praying for one another outside of the group time. They will be spending time with one another outside of the family meal. They will be sitting together and checking on each other on Sundays. Individuals will have a sense of being stronger when they are with the group.
5. **Is there an atmosphere of openness, warmth, honest, sincerity, and genuineness?** Usually the group leaders set the tone in the group for each of these things. If they lead with openness, honesty, warmth, humility, and sincerity, the group will usually follow and imitate what they observe. A stiff, wooden, flat, cold, religious, or hierarchical atmosphere will tend to drive people away.
6. **Does the group have a sense of being a part of the larger church?** The group should feel connected to the larger church, not isolated. If they *do* feel connected, they will be enthusiastic about what is going on in the life of the church. They will be praying for the ministries of the church. Individuals in the group will be becoming members, and they will increasingly be giving generously and serving faithfully.
7. **Is the group growing in size?** Healthy groups tend to grow numerically. As a result of the personal growth that people within the group are experiencing, they desire that others would be enjoying the same experience and therefore invite them in.
8. **Does the group benefit from primary and assistant leadership?** In other words, is the group led by more than one household? A true plurality that brings with it a sharing of burdens and a complementarity in gifting and perspective usually requires at least two households on the leadership team—regardless of whether each household consists of a single person or a married couple. Further, one of the marks of a healthy group is that it is multiplying. Frontline Church exists to multiply gospel communities. However, a group that is not developing gospel leaders cannot multiply gospel communities. Healthy groups take leadership development seriously.



9. **Does the group begin and end on time?** People will be far more likely to faithfully come to the group if they can count on it beginning and ending on schedule. It is inconsiderate and breaks trust with people if the leaders regularly go over their announced ending time.
10. **What is the time break-down among the various elements (meal, Scripture, sharing, prayer) within the group?** A group should provide a balance between these elements. If the group is dominated by intellectual discussion, and gives personal sharing and prayer the leftovers of the meeting, this will have an adverse effect on the group. Prayer should not be an addendum to group gatherings, but should instead be a substantive portion of group gatherings.
11. **What is their method for leading times of discussion?** Do the leaders speak much more than everyone else? If they are giving a monologue rather than encouraging a dialogue about Scripture, then people's satisfaction with the group will decrease and they will stop participating. Community group gatherings are not primarily intended to be a time for leaders to display their teaching gifts, however good they may be. Instead, it provides an opportunity for people to discuss together what Scripture is saying and apply it to their lives, as well as articulate and develop their own beliefs. In order to facilitate conversation in the most edifying way, leaders should think of themselves as snipers. Their facilitation should be characterized by lots of vigilant listening, stillness, and drawing out of others' hearts, coupled with only very occasionally dispensing a thoughtful, concise, and well-aimed contribution.
12. **What are the "on-ramps" to the other rhythms of community?** If people do not regularly hear about the need for spiritual formation and the opportunity to join a discipleship group, they are unlikely to participate in that rhythm. Likewise, groups that do not carve out time to pray for their "three," or talk about ways to push back darkness in their city, will rarely gather for mission.
13. **What is the size of the group?** Once a group grows larger than ten to twenty adults in attendance, one's ability to participate is significantly reduced. Inability to participate decreases satisfaction with the group and leads to drop-out. (The range given is so wide because there are other factors at play that will affect how large a group subjectively "feels" to its members. Eleven adults with fifteen kids might feel chaotic and unmanageable sooner than a group of seventeen adults with three kids, or twenty-one adults with no kids.)
14. **Do you sense that people bring enthusiasm and expectancy to the group gathering? Why or why not?** Usually a lack of expectancy and enthusiasm is a function of the other diagnostic questions raised here. This is a helpful question to ask to prevent us from being dishonest about some of the other categories. A lack of purpose, a lack of participation, a failure to be ministered to or be able to minister to others, etc., can all lead to a lack of enthusiasm in the group. Then again, maybe everyone got to bed too late this week, or is still recovering from a bout of the flu!
15. **Does everyone participate in the group? If not, why not?** If people do not have the opportunity to participate, their sense of satisfaction with the group will be greatly diminished. There are many potential reasons for a lack of participation. The group may be



too large. The group may not perceive that there is an atmosphere of openness. Discussions may be being led in too much of a monologue style, etc. You will have to determine what the cause is and how to address it, but make no mistake. Whatever the cause, it won't address itself.

16. **What is the quality of participation in the group?** Are people moving towards each other and having thoughtful conversations? Are people “speaking truth in love” to one another or does conversation tend to stick to superficial, “low risk” subjects? Are people aiming for the heart, and speaking out of a desire to build others up and minister to them, or are they “speaking to hear themselves speak”?
17. **Do people sense that they are valuable to the group?** Are they given ownership in the group through being encouraged to use their gifts? Are they able to contribute to the group by helping with various tasks? A healthy Christian community is marked by all its members becoming increasingly involved contributors to the life of the group. A person's sense of belonging is greatly enhanced when they believe they are doing things that are significant for the wellbeing of the group. A person should have a sense that they would be missed if for some reason he or she were not in attendance.
18. **Is their attendance fairly consistent?** If not, to what do they attribute the inconsistency? Perhaps it is just the lifestyle of the broader culture that leads to sporadic attendance. However, it could also be that people don't understand the importance and the nature of Christian community—that we need each other and are interdependent. Or perhaps they do not sense that they are valued, and don't believe they will be missed if they are absent.
19. **Do the leaders take initiative to cultivate health in the group?** Are they proactive (rather than controlling)? Are they patient (rather than grumbling)? Do they know how to avoid blaming themselves for the immaturity of their people on the one hand, while still taking responsibility to humbly correct, exhort, and pursue those entrusted into their care on the other? Do they tend to blame shift and act helpless (rather than redemptively move towards, pray for, and correct those in their care)? We should slow down and listen carefully if a leader consistently attributes all the issues in their group to broad, ethereal cultural forces. If a leader is always metaphorically playing you a video of the behavior of the people in their group, and they themselves are always the one holding the camera, and are never “in the shot,” it could be helpful to explore with them how their behavior is more intertwined with the behavior of their group members than they might realize. Listen for a tone of helplessness or victimhood in a leader. Seek to help them aim at meaningful ways to take responsibility to cultivate health in their group—while avoiding the ditch of control on the one hand, or abdication on the other. In a marriage and in a community group, we want to look for and play a copy of the tape where everyone's in the shot.



August					September					October					November					December				
					Visit group 1					Visit group 2					Visit group 3					Visit group 4				
					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting				
					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 1 and 2					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 3 and 4					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 1 and 2					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 3 and 4				
Host hub leadership gathering																								
Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting				
1:1 with Community Director																								
					Congregation-wide training?																			
															Missional hub party or project (all c-group members)									
Church-wide men's gathering?																								

January					February					March					April					May				
					Visit group 1					Visit group 2					Visit group 3					Visit group 4				
					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting					In-person 'visit follow-up' meeting				
					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 1 and 2					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 3 and 4					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 1 and 2					One-on-one with primary male leaders of groups 3 and 4				
Host hub leadership gathering (evening prior to Life Together)																								
Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting					Monthly hub leader/elder meeting				
1:1 with Community Director																								
																				Congregation-wide training?				
															Missional hub party or project (all c-group members)									
Life Together conference																								
Church-wide women's gathering?																								

Congregation and Church				Hub Team		Leaders and Groups								
August	September	October	November	December						January	February	March	April	May
														