



PART 2

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER?

Community group leaders serve a vital role in our church. A community group leader is responsible for the direction and health of their community group. They oversee, coach, and develop the apprentices within their group. For this reason, there are certain requirements for community group leaders.

REQUIREMENTS FOR A COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER

The following requirements must be met for someone to be considered for community group leadership:

- ***A believing and baptized Christian***
- ***A covenant member in good standing with the church***
- ***Completion of the launch process found at frontlinechurch.com/launch***

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER JOB DESCRIPTION

Does the thought of leading a community group make you nervous? You're not alone. Like most people, you might be carrying a confusing and contradictory tangle of ideas about leadership that swirl in the culture at large. You might think to yourself: "I'm not a leader—leaders should be charismatic and outgoing, and always know what to do. On top of all that, to lead in the church you need to be armed with ready-made answers to every conceivable biblical question."

Or, like many others, you might be carrying bad memories of previous leadership experiences. You might think to yourself: "My experience of leadership has always been lonely and exhausting, but I keep getting sucked back in because nobody else will step up."

If you can relate to any of that, good news! Our community group leaders don't have all the answers either. They are not afraid to say, "I don't know, but I'll get back to you," because they know their pastors and hub leaders will help them find the answers they need. Our community group leaders have wildly diverse personality types and talents, and they have been relieved to discover they don't have to lead alone.

Community group leadership is both easier and harder than you might think. Easier because at Frontline character and commitment always trump charisma and copious knowledge. Harder because refusing to lead alone, asking for help, saying "I don't know," listening more than talking, and patiently walking alongside others are not behaviors any of us have seen modeled enough. Our community group leaders are normal people, just like you, who quietly and patiently walk alongside, listen to, pray for, and follow up with others—and they do all of those things for people *with* people, as a team.

If you are willing, set aside your preconceptions, assumptions, and fears about leadership for a moment, and see if the following five commitments don't stir something in your heart. Here is the real "job description" of a Frontline community group leader:

- ***A commitment to co-labor***
- ***A commitment to communicate***
- ***A commitment to pursue***
- ***A commitment to mature***
- ***A commitment to champion***

1. A COMMITMENT TO CO-LABOR

Most people assume community group leadership is inherently lonely, but lonely community group leadership is not sustainable leadership. Scripture describes being saved out of the world as simultaneously being saved into a family. All of us have been given spiritual gifts to build each other up, but none of us have been given all the gifts. Because Jesus has designed the Church to function interdependently, we are committed to team ministry at Frontline. When leaders feel weary, overwhelmed, and lonely, they tend to think “It’ll be easier if I just do it myself.”

Counter-intuitively, a large part of leadership is learning to ask for help, give up control, and share the load. We might go faster alone, but we’ll go farther together. Team ministry moves far slower, but it’s far more sustainable.

Ask for help. Identify others’ gifting and energy in the areas of planning, hosting, communication, and facilitation. Invite them in. Give up control in order to gain help. Don’t get discouraged when their help doesn’t meet your standards the first time around. Gently and calmly give them direct and immediate feedback, and watch them grow in using their gifts to support you and bless the group.

Healthy community group leaders aren’t Lone Rangers who do everything themselves. Instead, they constantly think and preach “team,” and work alongside others to help their group grow in maturity. Rather than taking on every role within their group, they delegate tasks and call others to relate to the group like owners, not renters. They also welcome and seek out coaching, advice, and soul care from their hub leaders.

A commitment to co-labor might look like...

- making a list of everything that’s needed for your group to be healthy and run smoothly, and asking yourself who might be good at stewarding each of those tasks (creating and communicating the group calendar, planning the family meals, hosting, facilitating a d-group, planning and coordinating a missional gathering, setting up a meal calendar for a new mom, leading a service project for an elderly group member, etc.).

- prayerfully reading through the “Apprenticeship” section of this handbook in order to strengthen your ability to identify, equip, and launch others.
- identifying and recruiting another person or couple to apprentice.

2. A COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATE

Communication is a key part of co-laboring. Lone Ranger leaders don’t tend to be great communicators. Your group members will feel cared for and led well whenever you proactively develop and communicate the plan for the upcoming schedule. Share the load of planning and communication to ensure it happens consistently. Just because you are responsible to make sure everything gets done doesn’t mean you should do everything.

Communication isn’t just for logistics—it’s also for relationship. One of the biggest keys to success as a community group leader is working to slowly build trust over time with your hub leader. As you get more comfortable with them, you can let them know more and more about what you’re thinking and feeling. In turn they can encourage you and pray for you in increasingly thoughtful ways. Can you name what you are afraid of? What you are avoiding? Share with your hub leader—it will lighten you. “We name things to tame things.”

A commitment to communicate might look like...

- sitting down with your fellow leaders and apprentices to map out dates, times, and locations for family meals and discipleship groups for the next 60 to 90 days. Once you’re done, have someone who’s handy with that kind of thing lay it all out in a clean and clear format and send it out to the group.
- recruiting someone to send out week-of and day-of reminders to the group before each gathering, as well as choose the themes, and coordinate the preparation, for all family meals.
- recruiting someone to collect everyone’s contact information (phone numbers, addresses, birthdays, names of children, etc.), and then distribute all the information to the group. They can also set up a group text or email thread, as

well as take the initiative to regularly update the group's communication channels whenever new members join the group. Ask them to alert you whenever a group member's birthday is approaching, as well as help facilitate a way to recognize and celebrate that person.

3. A COMMITMENT TO PURSUE

Community group leaders are not called to merely set out chips and salsa and keep the conversation going. Community group leaders are called to walk alongside other people as spiritual friends and fellow travelers, in order to get to know them well enough to pray for them. Indeed, all forms of "pursuit" are simply variations on the theme of knowing people well enough to pray for them.

Only God is all-knowing, all-powerful, and everywhere-at-once. You won't be able to answer all their questions, fix all their problems, or be there for them all the time. But you can always listen, encourage, and pray. You can always ask thoughtful questions. You can always notice when they're absent, and let them know they were missed. You can always follow up after a meaningful conversation, ask how they're doing, and let them know they've been on your mind. In fact, the majority of your ministry as a community group leader will involve offering your peaceful, prayerful presence, and then following up.

A commitment to pursue might look like...

- taking a few moments after a meaningful conversation to stop and write down significant details before you forget them (names of family members, significant life events, etc.). The notes section of their contact card in your phone is a great spot that can be easily pulled up or added to.
- setting a reminder in your calendar to pray for someone before a big event in their life, as well as calling them afterwards to hear how it went. Or setting a reminder for yourself to call and pray for someone when you know they'll be on a business trip and struggling with loneliness or temptation.
- casting vision for how every member can take personal initiative to move towards others, and check-in, listen, pray, and otherwise be human with each other during unstructured time

together. This is particularly applicable to the family meal.

- asking an appropriate, trusted person in your group to check in on someone who's been absent or has a need.

4. A COMMITMENT TO MATURE

We don't necessarily invite people to consider community group leadership because they're brimming with leadership confidence. We invite them because they're brimming with character, and seem to possess a sense of calling to this unique ministry—the kind of calling that will keep them from bailing out the minute it gets hard. Competence can be coached on the job, but character and calling are prerequisites. That's the paradox of leadership—sometimes the people who feel the least qualified are the most qualified! Pride might keep someone from growing as a leader, but fear could keep them from ever becoming one in the first place—especially if they wrongly assume they have to be a Bible expert, trauma specialist, public speaker, or visionary thought leader (whatever that is).

Again, character is a prerequisite for community group leadership, and perhaps the most unmistakable mark of character is humility—the kind of realistic view of ourselves that makes us teachable, receptive, and willing to grow.

Spiritual maturity is not a destination at which any of us have arrived, but a direction in which we're all headed. One sign that we are growing in maturity is if we can name—with help from our friends—at least one place where we sense an invitation from Jesus to grow and change.

- Jonathan is more likely to: hide his flaws, avoid challenges, and view feedback as a personal attack.
- Kristen is more likely to: believe mistakes are part of learning, embrace challenges, and welcome feedback.

Would those closest to you say you're more like Jonathan or Kristen?

Community group leadership requires patience with yourself and patience with your group. You

can expect to make mistakes. What matters most is how you respond. Don't beat yourself up over every little mistake. Rather, as you fix your eyes on Jesus, you will stop thinking less of yourself, and start to think of yourself less. God will faithfully lead you into radical "extrospection," where you navel-gaze less, and move towards others more. Paul describes this progression as "love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim 1:5).

This kind of humble receptivity is enabled and sustained only by genuine spiritual vitality—including regular rhythms of communing with God through Scripture and prayer. If that doesn't feel true of your present reality, begin cultivating new habits that will sustain you on the journey. For help with engaging Scripture, see additional resources in our Leadership Library (frontlinechurch.com/library).

At Frontline, every ministry role invests in your development as a follower of Jesus before it's ever about what you can do for that ministry. We are committed to using ministry to build up people, rather than using people to build up ministry.

A commitment to mature might look like...

- fighting to regularly find your joy and comfort in the Lord—through Scripture, prayer, and fresh infillings of the Spirit.
- taking the initiative to ask for help on the front end, and feedback on the back end, instead of avoiding it, or merely bracing for it.
- learning to tell yourself a different story when you make mistakes, by actively naming how each mistake has created an opportunity for you to strengthen a weakness, deepen your character, or learn a new skill.

5. A COMMITMENT TO CHAMPION

Every local church has its own way of doing things—the ministry practices by which they seek to live out the mission God has given them. And every church must agree on a particular kind of discipleship strategy, so they can all head in the same direction with one heart and mind. At Frontline, community groups play an essential role in how we do ministry. We've chosen to gather our community groups in

three different rhythms: discipleship groups, family meals, and missional gatherings. These three rhythms are not sacred or inherently superior to any other model. Other churches may do things differently with great success. But we believe these rhythms are the best way for us to love God, love people, and push back darkness in this time and place.

Community group leaders must be willing to champion these rhythms and how we seek to walk them out. They cannot half-heartedly run these plays, or pull their group in a different direction from the rest of our church. Leaders who spend more energy complaining about the model than capitalizing on its strengths will miss out on countless opportunities to disciple their people. If all our groups are on the same page, rowing in the same direction, and working from the same plan, our people will generally experience growth and health, despite the inherent imperfection of any and every ministry strategy. Leaders need to believe in our model, cast vision for why it matters, and call their people to commit to living it out with them.

A commitment to champion might look like...

- carefully reading through the section of this handbook entitled "The Rhythms of Community Groups" in order to gain a better understanding of both the "why" and "what" of each rhythm.
- identifying and naming any internal resistance towards, or confusion about, any of the three rhythms you might feel—and then giving your community director the opportunity to speak with you in person about your resistance or confusion.
- being well-versed in not just the limitations and imperfections of our model, but also its benefits, advantages, and unique opportunities.

New community group leaders are identified and equipped by existing group leaders and hub leaders, particularly through our apprenticeship process. If you have a desire to lead a group and haven't been approached yet, reach out to your group leader about becoming an apprentice.

1. **Watch the community group leader training videos.** You can find these videos online at frontlinechurch.com/launch. These videos will lay the groundwork for your time as a community group leader.
2. **Complete the Gospel Self-Assessment.** You can find this online assessment at frontlinechurch.com/launch. If you already filled out the Gospel Self-Assessment as part of your apprenticeship process, you do not need to fill it out again.
3. **Meet with your community director and hub leaders for an assessment.** Once you've submitted the Gospel Self-Assessment, your community director will reach out to set up this meeting. Afterwards, if your leaders feel you are ready to step into this role, you will be provided with next steps.
4. **Complete MinistrySafe's Sexual Abuse Awareness Training.** Before becoming a community group leader, every candidate must be in compliance with Frontline's MinistrySafe Sexual Abuse Awareness Training policy. Your community director will let you know how to proceed.
5. **Get commissioned on a Sunday.** This is an opportunity for the church to pray over you as your community group prepares to launch, but it's also a chance for you to do some free advertising! Formally request to be commissioned, and make sure all the details for your new group are locked in (e.g., launch date, time, place, etc.) by filling out the Launch Checklist, which can be found at frontlinechurch.com/launch.