

**I. Bible Study**

- A. Acts 2:46-47
- B. Acts 5:42
- C. Acts 8:3
- D. Acts 20:20
- E. Romans 16:3-5
- F. 1 Corinthians 16:19
- G. Colossians 4:15

What do all these passages have in common?

Why is it so important that the early church grew from house to house?

How has that changed in the time since Acts?

**II. Training****A. Why TLC Groups?**

One frequently noted objection to being part of a large growing church is the fear among its current members that increased growth will result in a loss of intimacy and the warm feeling of being a small family. People who may find it difficult to know those already in the church too often view newcomers as frustrating additions to an already existing problem. TLC groups are designed to provide the intimacy and feeling of family important to all members in the body of Christ.

Toward that end, we differentiate between Celebration ministry and Cell ministry.

**Celebration ministry** is when the entire church gathers together in a united act of worship and commitment to Christ. This usually happens through the worship services. These events are festive and inspirational in nature. The celebration area of ministry is unlimited in the number of people it can serve. This is a neighbor-to-neighbor interaction.

**Cell ministry** is needed based on the lack of intimate relationships found in celebration ministry. Even though individuals may be able to know and be known in a group over 15, there is little opportunity for the close, intimate, consistent fellowship we desire with other Christians. This need is met through the cell or small group. The cell area of ministry involves no more than 15 people in any one small group. This size assures that each person will be listened to, cared for, and prayed for on a regular basis. This is heart-to-heart interaction.

**B. The Purpose of Tender Loving Christian Groups**

Tender Loving Christian Groups are ...

- ... a network of small groups meeting in homes throughout the area.
- ... for both members and friends of Advent
- ... an ideal place to bring non-Christian friends.
- ... a place for giving and receiving care in the congregation.
- ... a primary place for Christian growth.

**Tender** – *When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Matthew 9:36*

The same tender compassion that Jesus demonstrated when he saw the crowds should be evident in each TLC Group.

**Loving** – *As I have loved you, so you must love one another. John 13:34*

Advent's motto is "Making Christ Known". How can you make Christ known without making others aware of Christ's love? TLC Groups provide an organized structure whereby the goal of showing Christ's love can be fulfilled.

**Christians** – *Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you truly love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." John 21:16*

Care describes the loving concern and support that Christians demonstrate for one another in tangible, real ways. Through baptism, all Christians are called to serve and minister to one another. However, oftentimes there is no structure to provide the care and support needed by people. TLC Groups are structured in such a way as to enable a high level of care for all those who participate.

While the care and support received in TLC Groups may be very therapeutic, they are not in any way professional therapy groups.

**C. Unique Characteristics of TLC Groups****Large Enough to Celebrate – Small Enough to Care**

The ideal size is between 8 and 12. As groups grow they will give birth to new groups. So, as Advent grows larger, it also grows smaller.

**One Body, yet Many Parts**

Unity in Purpose – Diversity in style. TLC groups are designed to meet people's needs. There is no master cookie cutter from which all groups will be patterned.

**Leader as Shepherd**

TLC Leaders will serve as shepherds to the groups as they coach and encourage the members to grow spiritually and live the abundant and obedient life.

**Leadership Community**

TLC Leaders need to support and encourage each other. Leaders will meet regularly with their Leader Coordinator.

**Empty Chair**

Every TLC Group is an open group. They are designed to give birth to new groups. They are not intended to be closed cliques. An empty chair at every meeting will symbolize the commitment of every TLC Group to grow.

**Individualized support of the TLC Leader**

TLC Groups will rise and fall on the effectiveness of TLC leaders. Therefore, the individualized leader support is crucial to the success of the entire ministry structure. TLC Leaders will be divided into groups of ten and will be supported by a TLC Leader Coordinator.

**D. How TLC groups fit in with the Church**

Read Exodus 18:13-26

What is Moses' problem?

What is God's solution (as pointed out by Jethro)?

How does that apply to TLC Groups?

Each TLC Group has a Leader.

Each 10 TLC Leaders have a Leader Coordinator.

The Leader Coordinator's role is one of advisor, coordinator, and supporter. This leadership group is known as the Leadership Community.

**E. TLC Leader Job Description****1. Purpose**

- a) To care for the members of your TLC Group
- b) To develop a person-to-person ministry which encourages outreach to both members of Advent and members of the local community in the name of our Lord Jesus.
- c) To develop TLC Leaders

**2. The TLC Leader Shall:**

- a) Pray for the growth and protection of your TLC members
- b) Accept responsibility for new conversion grown by using the empty chair strategy to grow your TLC Group and birthing new TLC Groups
- c) Be committed to living the Christian lifestyle with a daily commitment to prayer.
- d) Prepare the TLC Group Meetings
- e) Recruit a Leader-in-Training.
- f) Work closely with both the Leader-in-Training and Host as part of your Leadership Team
- g) Provide spiritual care to all members of your TLC Group and their families as appropriate.
- h) Promote the concept of TLC Groups
- i) Communicate announcements
- j) Attend the TLC Leaders Meetings/Leadership Community
- k) Notify your Leader Coordinator and the pastoral staff of any crisis situation that may require their response.

**F. TLC Leader-in-Training Job Description**

1. Purpose
  - a) To be in training as a TLC leader.
  - b) To assist the TLC Leader care for the members of your TLC Group
2. The TLC Leader-in-Training Shall:
  - a) Pray for the members of your TLC Group.
  - b) Be committed to living the Christian lifestyle with a daily commitment to prayer.
  - c) Prepare for the TLC Group Meetings
  - d) Work closely with the TLC Leader as part of your Leadership Team.
  - e) Promote the concept of TLC Groups.
  - f) Encourage and model an atmosphere of loving outreach.
  - g) Attend the TLC Leaders Meetings/Leadership Community.
  - h) Work toward developing your own TLC group.
  - i) Notify your Leader Coordinator and the pastoral staff of any crisis situation that may require their response.

**G. TLC Group Administrator Job Description**

1. Purpose
  - a) To manage the schedule of the TLC Group
  - b) To inform the Church Office about Meeting dates, times and places.
2. The TLC Group Administrator shall:
  - a) Keep a schedule of TLC meetings, including dates, times and places.
  - b) Coordinate with the TLC Group when scheduling conflicts arise.
  - c) Be the communication point for those who cannot attend a meeting.
  - d) Inform the Church Office of TLC meeting places, times and dates.
  - e) Provide a summary of the current lesson to the Newsletter Editor for inclusion.
  - f) Coordinate special needs as they may occur.

**H. TLC Group Host Job Description**

1. Purpose
  - a) To provide a meeting place for the TLC Group.
2. The TLC Host shall:
  - a) Have a genuine interest in guests and greet them with a warm and friendly smile.
  - b) Set up simple refreshment prior to the TLC Meeting so you'll be ready to greet the guests as they arrive.
  - c) Arrange the room in cooperation with the leader
  - d) Have extra Bibles and pencils ready.
  - e) Meet people at the door.
  - f) Set an atmosphere of love and acceptance for everyone, regular attendees and guests, calling them by their first names and introducing them to others.
  - g) Wait until guests have left before cleaning up and re-arranging furniture.

**I. Leadership Challenges**

Traditional Leaders	TLC Leaders
Gifted teacher	Not necessarily gifted in teaching or leadership
Strong leader	Allows others to use their gifts
Bears full responsibility for the group	Allows members of the group to own decisions
Final authority on group decisions	Consults with higher authorities
Usually hosts the group in their home	Does not always host the group
Administers/coordinates all events	Releases key tasks to others in the group
Does it all – Burns out first	Shares it all – allows God to be God

The important thing about leading a TLC Group is not the ability of the leader, but the leader's trust in the ability of God.

**III. Sharing**

**IV. Prayer**

**V. Fellowship**