

BEAUTIFUL BIBLE STUDIES: FIVE ESSENTIALS TO DRAW WOMEN IN & KEEP THEM COMING BACK!

*Seek the Kingdom of God above all else and live righteously, and he will
give you everything you need. -Matthew 6:33*

May 5, 2016

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BEAUTIFUL ESSENTIAL #1: LOVING SUSIE LONGTALKER WITHOUT LETTING HER SIDETRACK YOUR GROUP

God loves everyone! He loves us whether we've got it all together or our lives are a hot mess. Out of that compassion, we want to show and serve others with the same love and compassion that God shows us.

QUESTION: How do we show love and compassion when someone in our Bible study or small group overwhelms the group with her struggles or lack of self-awareness?

For example:

*Susie Longtalker...*She begins talking and she's going to talk for at least 10 minutes.

*Christy Crisis...*Each new week brings a new drama to her life.

*Debbie Downer...*She always has it worse.

*Broke Betty...*She's nice and polite, but Betty always needs something from someone.

*Pam Pick-Me...*No matter how often you try, Pam is always the first to answer.

*Sarah Spiritual...*She knows EVERYTHING about Jesus and the Bible. And you don't.

ESSENTIAL #1: Great bibles require healthy contributions and periodical withdrawals.

DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING SCENARIO: *Elizabeth has attended your bi-weekly women's bible study group for the past three months. She loves being a part of the group and you can tell that she is growing in her faith. However, Elizabeth brings her 2 ½ year old daughter because she cannot afford a babysitter. Currently, there is no childcare available during your study. Her sweet daughter is adorable, but she runs and screams, often disrupting group conversation and prayer.*

1. What potentially positive opportunities does Elizabeth's situation present for her and your group?
2. How would you address this situation with Elizabeth? How would you follow-up with your group?

LEADERSHIP PRINCIPALS FOR YOU TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM:

- The spiritual health and vitality of the group is our highest priority.
- Individual struggles are best addressed sooner over later and preferably, one-on-one.
- Always have women available to mentor someone in your group who is struggling. (I suggest meeting two weeks in a row and then bi-weekly for three months or until the crisis is over or stable.)
- Everyone in the group is waiting for the leader to step up and address the situation.
- Future of the group is dependent on the ability of leader to address situation.

NEXT STEPS:

1. First, determine whether or not you have a tendency to display one of the high-maintenance personalities. If you aren't sure, ask a trusted friend.
2. As a leadership team, create a training plan to help your leaders and group leaders love and lead high maintenance personalities. For example: putting a mentoring referral program in place
3. Commit as a leadership team to lovingly, yet immediately addressing high-maintenance behavior by individuals in groups.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – See “High Maintenance” quick reference sheet in appendix for more information to train your leaders on loving and leading high-maintenance personalities in your groups.

BEAUTIFUL ESSENTIAL #2: GIVE THEM WHAT THEY WANT AND DELIVER WHAT THEY NEED

We desperately want the women at our church to be sold-out, calling-down-fire from heaven believers. And this is a good thing! However, most of the women at our churches are preoccupied with trying to keep their families together, not cuss someone out on Facebook, getting to church in one piece on Sunday and struggling to lose 10 pounds. How do we reach them where they are at and point them to Jesus?

Jesus presented relevant, interesting stories to people that captured their interest and held their attention. Jesus IS the answer whatever is broken, missing or needs to be transformed in our lives. Remember, Jesus knew how to fish. Put some bait on a hook and wait...they'll come.

QUESTION: What winning formula must be present in order to capture a woman's attention and keep her engaged in a Bible study or small group, no matter her age/stage or level of spiritual maturity?

ESSENTIAL #2: Reaching new audiences and maintaining engagement requires two elements: Establishing personal relationships and satisfying felt needs.

DISCUSS AT YOUR TABLE: What are the needs of the women in your church lately? What are the needs of the women that you'd like to connect with outside of your church?

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PRINCIPALS FOR YOU TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM:

- Identify the needs of the audience that you are trying to reach – not just the needs of the audience you are trying to keep.
- Leaders help the audience discover how the earthly felt need can only be satisfied in Jesus.
- We trust that the Holy Spirit working in the lives of the women will transform their lives. Our job isn't to change the women, but we must be willing to keep offering relevant ways to connect with them where they are at in life.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Find out what your intended audience is curious about. Use Facebook to survey or send an email using a feature like SurveyMonkey.com. Here are some questions to ask: *What are you curious about? What would you like to know more about? What are the things that keep you up late at night?*
2. Evaluate those answers and determine which spiritual principles best connect with those answers. Here are some of the key spiritual principles that women often grapple with:
 - Identity and Purpose – Who am I and/or What am I here for?
 - Stage of Life – Singleness, Married Life, Motherhood, Divorce, “Half-time” Life
 - Overcoming Shame, Brokenness and/or pursuing recovery
 - Relationships and Unforgiveness
3. Compile a list of Bible studies that match with what your intended audience is curious about as well as spiritual principles they need to know. **IMPORTANT: Please show video clips of speaker!**
4. Connect with women who are not currently attending your church, by considering the following: hosting a mother's tea at your local elementary schools, connecting with Spiritual Emphasis Director at local YMCA or hosting a youth sports team and building relationships.

“Relevance is at the heart of engagement; it's the sweet spot that makes the difference in helping people feel as if they belong.”

–Jim Hauden, The Art of Connection

**BEAUTIFUL ESSENTIAL #3:
PLAN AHEAD SO THAT WOMEN CAN PLAN TO ATTEND!**

Yes, people are busier than ever. However, the women at your church need Bible study more than ever! And the following principle still exists: If the women know that we will be addressing **what's broken, missing or changed** their lives, they will sign up and attend our Bible study.

ESSENTIAL #3: Women will plan to attend if they know IN ADVANCE what they will experience and HOW it will positively impact their lives.

DISCUSS AT YOUR TABLE: What are some advantages to creating a Bible study schedule months in advance? What are some of the challenges that you would have to address? What are possible solutions or alternatives?

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PRINCIPALS FOR YOU TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM:

- Everything rises and falls with leadership! Choose the leader first before anything else.
- The leader's stage of life will determine who will be attracted to the group.
- Consider holding registration for two or three Bible study or small group studies at a time.
- Everyone loves a party! So, plan to celebrate the end of every Bible study ends!
- What are some other ways that we can offer a Bible study experience? Online?

NEXT STEPS:

1. Compile a list of Bible studies that may be a fit for your church. (Today's tip: Snap a picture!)
2. Use the following planning grid to map out your next three Bible studies.
3. Consider promoting all three Bible studies and dates at the same time.

	WHAT'S UP?	WHAT'S NEXT?	IDEAS IN THE HOLE?
TITLE OF STUDY/TYPE: (Book/Workbook/DVD) COST:			
LEADER: CO-LEADER:			
START DATE/ DURATION:			
LOCATION:			
CONFIRMATION:	◇ Title ◇ Leader/Co-Leader ◇ Date ◇ Location Reserved	◇ Title ◇ Leader/Co-Leader ◇ Date ◇ Location Reserved	◇ Title ◇ Leader/Co-Leader ◇ Date ◇ Location Reserved

**BEAUTIFUL ESSENTIAL #4:
MULTIPLY YOUR GROUPS BY CONNECTING WHO YOU KNOW**

Our church is small...Lots of people are in a bible study or small groups...Who else can we invite?

In Essential #2, we discussed that personal relationships are one of the key ingredients in drawing people into groups. The same applies to multiplying groups. Too often, we'll have a great Bible study or small group experience and we'll want to keep it to ourselves. However, believers are called to go out and invite others into Christian community. No more "holy huddles!"

QUESTION: How do we continue to add new faces to our Bible studies or groups?

ESSENTIAL #4: If you connect the dots, your groups will multiply a lot!

The following is a connection model designed by Brett Eastman, a national expert on small group connection. He's the architect behind Saddleback Church's thousands of Bible study groups. This simple model can be used at anytime to start a Bible study or small group invite list.

<p style="text-align: center;">FAMILY</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FAITH (CHURCH)</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FUN (HOBBIES)</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">FACTORY (WORK)</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FRIENDS</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>4. _____</p> <p>5. _____</p>	

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PRINCIPALS FOR YOU TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM:

- Choose Bible study topics that your team can't wait to tell their friends about!
- Find speaker clips that are 1 minute or less to share on social media
- Eliminate "Us-Four-And-No-More" dynamic by changing up "face-with-a-place"

NEXT STEPS:

1. Each woman on your women's ministry team should fill out this form.
2. Put an * by the names of potential leaders or co-leaders and determine how many Bible study groups or table leaders can be involved. The more people engaged, the more future grown.
3. PERSONAL INVITE, PERSONAL INVITE- You can invite by text, Facebook, phone call.

BEAUTIFUL ESSENTIAL #5: EVERYONE GETS A JOB!

We all want to have more volunteers! Are you tired of 80% of the work being accomplished by only 20% of the people? Could it be that we are getting in our own way of recruiting volunteers?

Years ago, I attended a Celebrate Recovery Summit training. One of the speakers mentioned that anytime someone new comes to Celebrate Recovery, he or she is asked to do something. Why? To help them feel like they belong. As much as possible, every woman at your Bible study should contribute to the community in some small way. She needs to know that her contribution will be missed if she isn't there!

QUESTION: What are some of your frustrations when it comes to volunteers or recruiting volunteers? What can you change or control?

ESSENTIAL #5: Involved people are invested people.

DISCUSS AT YOUR TABLE: When is the last time that you did an "audit" of the volunteer positions in your small group or women's ministry? What are some of the advantages of getting new people immediately involved? What will you need to think or do differently in order for that to happen?

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PRINCIPALS FOR YOU TO DISCUSS WITH YOUR TEAM:

- What are the ways that new people feel involved and invested without getting scared away?
- What kinds of questions should we ask a new woman to connect with her? What kinds of questions should we NOT ask?
- What kind of basic expectations should we teach to our volunteers?

NEXT STEPS: Consider making these volunteer roles a regular part of your small group/women's ministry:

- ✓ **Greeter** – One volunteer each week should be there to welcome the members of the group at the entrance – even if the group is established. It sets the expectation that new women should always be anticipated.
- ✓ **Testimony** – Ask one woman each week to share a five-minute testimony about her life and her favorite Bible verse. Select women at least two-three weeks in advance, make sure she writes it her testimony and set a timer to keep it to five-minutes.
- ✓ **Meals Ministry Coordinator** – Women deliver babies, families move, enter into the hospital or care for sick family members on a regular basis. Select one volunteer to champion a meals ministry using online resources like Care Calendar.
- ✓ **Social Media Volunteer** – If one of your ladies is always on Facebook, then ask her to manage your women's ministry or small group page! Give her guidelines or ask her to present a researched plan on how often to post and what types of messages to post.
- ✓ **Table/Discussion Leader** – This is a great new leader role! She'll encourage conversation and model good listening skills for the rest of the group.
- ✓ **INVOLVE NEW PEOPLE! Table Cleaner/Floor Sweeper** – This is a simple role that will make new women feel like they are part of the group. Make sure that you give her the cleaner and towels – she'll feel intimidated if she has to look for them.

APPENDIX: Check out the "GUEST" model in the appendix. This was adopted from the Ritz Carlton Hotel chain. You can use this to train your volunteers on great hospitality!

APPENDIX

In this section, you'll find additional resources and information to help you incorporate these Beautiful Essentials into the unique context of your church. You are welcome to adopt or adapt anything that you see on the following pages.

HIGH MAINTENANCE PERSONALITIES – SUGGESTIONS FOR VARIOUS SITUATIONS

What if...	How They Might Affect the Group	What a Leader Can Do to Help
...someone who talks too much	<p>A person who talks too much can drain the life of a group as they control and dominate conversation.</p> <p>Others in the group lose their chance to contribute because this person is always talking, which may lead to resentment against the “talker.”</p> <p>Those who talk too much also tend to keep the conversation at a more surface-level, avoiding feelings and deeper issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Look for a break in this person’s comments, then ask the group, “<i>What do the rest of you think?</i>” or ask another person, “<i>What do you think, Joe?</i>” A short silence may be needed for group members to feel that “the coast is clear” for them to finally speak. This might require patience and might be difficult for the talkative person to allow.· If a talkative person continues to dominate conversation, you may need to have a private conversation with them about their behavior. Let them know that you’re glad for their participation but invite them to listen and learn from others in the group as well. This might be hard for them to hear. Extra gentleness is needed for this conversation.
...someone who talks very little or is silent	<p>A person who doesn’t talk may be shy, filled with shame, or just feel like they have nothing valuable to add.</p> <p>When a member of the group is conspicuously silent, other members may feel anxious or even feel judged by the lack of responsiveness from the silent person.</p> <p>If this under-the-surface dynamic continues over time, it can erode the overall trust of the group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Do not pressure a quiet person to talk. Be curious about why they might be hesitant to share and be considerate of their need to process.· Consistently encourage this person’s participation by responding to and appreciating any comments they do make. Don’t stop inviting them to share.· Mention, “<i>What you’re thinking is important to me. Would you like to share anything?</i>”· If you feel that their silence is beginning to negatively impact the group, you may want to speak with them privately. Ask them what their silence means and how you can encourage them to participate.

What if...	How They Might Affect the Group	What a Leader Can Do to Help
<p>...someone tries to “fix” everyone’s problems by giving advice.</p>	<p>A person who routinely gives quick answers may think they are trying to be helpful but might actually be hurting the person in pain.</p> <p>When someone tries to “fix” our problem too quickly, they short-circuit our process of healing and may even inflict a new wound of not being heard or feeling alone in the problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · A private conversation with this person may be necessary. They may not be aware that they are “fixing” others. · Invite this person to give the gift of patient listening before they give advice. · Encourage this person to allow other people to be where they are. Challenge them to permit the emotions or questions of others, even if it makes them uncomfortable. Let them know this is a loving thing to do for someone else.
<p>...someone consistently blames or confronts.</p>	<p>Conflict in a group is not a bad thing. It may indicate that group members are becoming more honest about their feelings. Conflict becomes a problem in a group, however, when a person doesn’t take responsibility for his or her own feelings but blame others instead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If a person’s anger becomes disruptive to the point of breaking down the group, ask your leader for help. This person may need individual attention and should not be permitted to dismantle the group with their behavior.
<p>...someone often interrupts or engages in side conversations</p>	<p>Interruptive comments and side conversations can erode the safety of a group.</p> <p>A person who commonly does these things may be acting in their own fear of intimacy or need to control or may be simply unaware of their behavior.</p> <p>The group may respond to that fear by not talking or avoiding deeper levels of conversation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · If side conversations are an issue in the group, ask the group to talk about what it feels like to have a side conversation going on when they are trying to share. End this discussion with a renewed commitment to listen to each other. · If this issue seems to revolve around the behavior of one person, it may be helpful to have a private conversation with them. Let them know the impact of their behavior on the group, and let them know that their valuable input will be better received in turn.

APPENDIX B: Training your volunteers to treat everyone like honored guests!

One of the best ways to ensure that new visitors will feel connected is great hospitality. What are the values that define great hospitality?

Famed hotel chain, The Ritz Carlton is known for exquisite hospitality and the hotel group's leader, Horst Schulze has identified key values that every single employee learns and executes each day.

Below is an adaptation of the Ritz Carlton's hospitality philosophy. This adaptation is currently being used weekly by a local church hospitality team. Here are some reflections on how an associate pastor uses this philosophy:

"I found that creating vision for a hospitality team was pretty difficult. GUEST was something that really helped. I was able to give them something that was concrete, consistent and physical. Each week we either talk about one of the acronyms or I share a story on how someone on the team used it to make a difference. My personal favorite is "G" God's Heart. I believe that is where it starts. "We want every Guest to sense that they matter to God and to us. All of our interactions need to be rooted in the conviction that every person matters to God." -Bryan Bockert, Associate Pastor, CedarCreek Church



APPENDIX C- Leader Self-Evaluation – The 4 C’s

What are some questions that existing or emerging leaders should ask themselves on a regular basis?

These four characteristics: character, competency, commitment and chemistry are known as the “4 Cs.” Leadership guru Jim Collins developed three C’s and others have adapted or added to his concept.

You can review these questions in order to evaluate how you are doing in each area as well as highlighting any potential concerns that need to be address prior to assuming leadership of a group. These questions are also a great evaluation tool when considering a new leader.

CHARACTER

- My core beliefs are consistent no matter my environment. Y N Unsure
- I am consistently living out Christ-Center principles such as honesty, humility, forgiveness and integrity. Y N Unsure
- When I make a mistake, I am quick to admit my error AND take responsibility for my actions (and refrain from blaming others). Y N Unsure

COMPETENCE

- I have experience leading others in a group environment. Y N Unsure
- I understand what it means to be a leader of a group. Y N Unsure
- I am aware of my leadership style. Y N Unsure
- I have a good understand of the Bible, key scriptural principals as well as the mission, vision and values of CedarCreek Church. Y N Unsure

COMMITMENT

- I am committed to my faith in all areas of Christian living. Y N Unsure
- I am committed to the mission, vision and values of my church. Y N Unsure
- I regularly attend weekly church services. Y N Unsure
- I have a track record of being a faithful participant in past activities and obligations, whether at work or another organization. Y N Unsure

CHEMISTRY

- I get along with people from different backgrounds & cultures. Y N Unsure
- When I meet new people, I am capable of establishing a rapport within a short period of time. Y N Unsure

I believe that I am “relationally” aware whenever I’m involved in a group environment. Y N Unsure

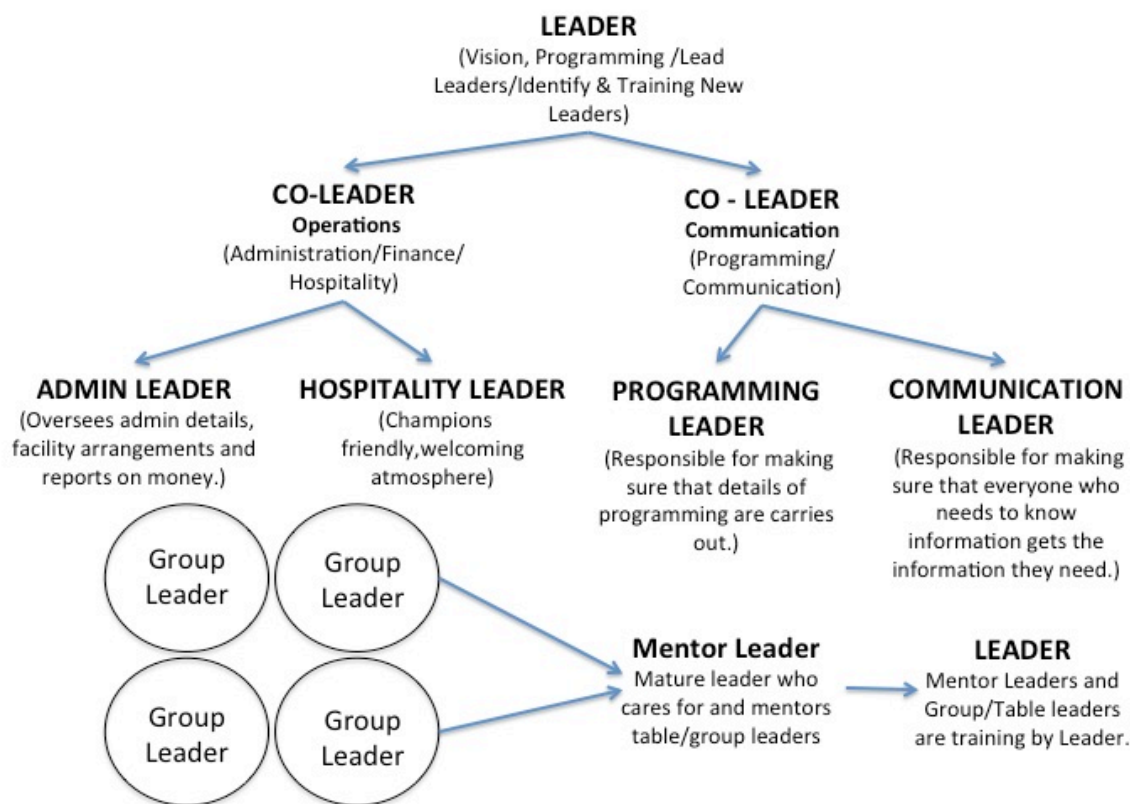
APPENDIX D – Sample Leadership Model

There are lots of ways to lead a women’s ministry or small group ministry. If your leadership model is working, great! However, if you’ve been thinking about making some changes and you’re looking for some research, here is a concept that you can use to spark some ideas.

The following model is a streamlined version of a leadership structure that we use with volunteer-led ministries at our multi-site campuses. This model takes in consideration that volunteer leaders are not able to shoulder a part-time or full-time staff workload. Yet, this model also gives high capacity volunteers the ability to make great contributions in their area of giftedness.

If the ministry leader is a volunteer, she should report to a staff member. I worked with many volunteer-leaders who oversaw large teams at multiple campuses. The most important thing that I could do was invite those individual leaders out for lunch or coffee every 8-12 weeks.

My role was to give those top leaders a place to share their celebrations and struggles as well as find out about the leadership health and well-being of their team. I would also work with the leader on replacing key leaders on the team.



APPENDIX E: New Group Worksheet

If you'd like to start multiple groups at the same time, here is a worksheet that you can send to potential group leaders to equip them to plan for the launch of their group.

1. Kick-off Date/Time: _____
2. Your Co-Leader's Name: _____
3. Are you and co-leader members in good standing? Y N
4. Group Type: Men's / Women's / Singles / Couples / Mixed / Family (w/children)
5. How often will your group meet? Weekly Bi-weekly Other:
6. Where will you host your group? _____
7. How many people can you accommodate in your group? (Ideal group size is 10 individuals) _____
8. Do you already have individuals who have committed to being a part of your group? List their names.
9. Will childcare be available? If so, how will childcare be handled? Cost? Who will be in charge of arranging childcare?
10. What type of hospitality are you planning each week? (Such as potluck meal, chips & snacks, beverages only or nothing) If offered, how will hospitality be managed each week (ie. Potluck, rotation, etc.)
11. What type of curriculum will you use to start your group?

Write down any questions that you may have about the study material? How will it be ordered? How will group members pay for material?

12. What kind of vision do you have for your group? What kind of group experience do you want your group members to have?

13. Are there any outstanding issues that you need to resolve before kicking off your group?

APPENDIX F: Leader Agreement

Being a leader or Bible study leader is one of the key leadership roles at your church. Leaders will have a major influence on the lives of those participating in their group.

Your church may have a formal membership process and leaders should be encouraged to engage in that process. You may also consider defined a set of guidelines that all small group or Bible study leaders will follow during their leadership tenure. This is not intended to be a burdensome yoke around a leader's neck, rather a tool to make sure there is clarity about what the leader's role entails.

Here's a sample of a group leader agreement:

All group leaders are members. As a member, you commit to:

- Have an open commitment to Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord.
- Maintain your commitment as a member of our church, which includes:
 - Model a lifestyle of personal and spiritual growth
 - Be faithful in attendance to church
 - Faithful tithing (giving 10%+ additional giving as God leads)
 - Champion and model personal invitational evangelism

As a group leader, you commit to:

- Attend and complete organized leader training.
- Actively participate in recruiting for your group/Bible study— both in the launch phase as well as recruiting to replenish your group members.
- Encourage and challenge group members to experience real transformation in their lives on a consistent, habit-forming basis.
- Show pastoral-type care to the people in your group – being reasonably available to listen, encourage, advise and counsel through phone calls, face-to-face meetings, Facebook or email.
- Build into the lives of your group members outside of group time.
- Provide opportunities for your group to serve in and outside of the church.
- Attend at least one Group Leader training/large group gathering each year.

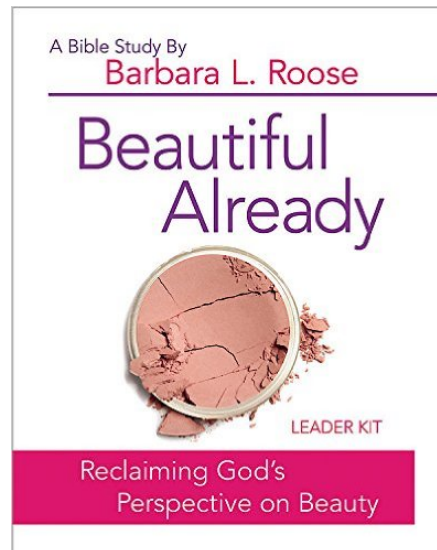
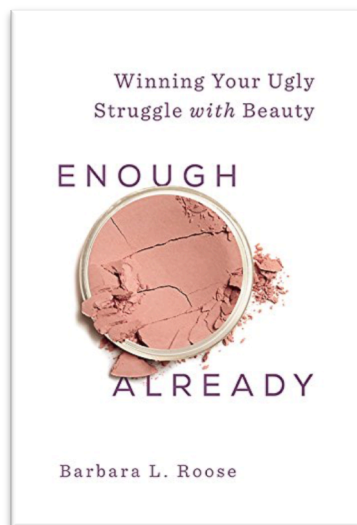
As Senior Leaders, Pastors and Staff, we commit to:

- Praying for you on a regular basis and keeping you informed of important news and updates through email, Facebook, phone calls or video.
- Offering leader opportunities that involve relationship-building, resourcing, and training
- Providing encouragement and accountability for your personal and spiritual health
- Setting clear expectations for and pastoring you as a Christ-follower and leader
- Providing and bringing awareness of resources to equip you as an individual and leader
- Being good listeners and available to your needs and requests and responding to them in an effective and responsible manner.
- Maintaining confidentiality
- Being honest and truthful
- Following up as necessary



ABOUT THE WORKSHOP FACILTATOR...

Barb Roose is speaker and author overflowing with a passion to connect women to God and each other. She is the author of the book, *Enough Already: Winning Your Ugly Struggle with Beauty* and a six-week DVD Bible study titled, *Beautiful Already: Reclaiming God's Perspective on Beauty*. Barb has been speaking at conferences, churches and women's ministry events since 2005. She inspires women through challenging Biblical teaching, personal stories and a deep love for each audience that clearly communicates how much they matter to God and to Barb. She loves connecting with women on social media at Facebook.com/barbararoose or at barbroose.com. Email: barb@barbroose



One final message of encouragement...

If today you are weary, can I encourage you to hold out your hands for the grace of God. As you receive this grace that does not run out, thank Him. Thank Him for remembering how He made you, only one woman with only two hands. Thank Him for showing you your limitations. Thank Him for reminding you that you cannot do it all, or be it all. Thank Him for reminding you that you cannot save yourself, or your family, or this world. You need a Savior and the rest of us do too. And because of grace, He knows us fully and loves us still. Hey weary woman, the God of heaven and earth sees you today. He is so pleased with how you care for the ones He has entrusted to you. Receive His good gift of grace and bless Him with your prayers. –from Angela Thomas