

LEADER AS PATIENT PART 1 | Leader's Guide

How God uses community building to heal us

Note

This sketch lays the foundation that building community is something good for us, and that God calls us to build community as a way to participate in our own healing. The key insight is two 'dramatic reversals' in Scripture: first, that God is a master who serves and second that the call of discipleship is the call to find the things we desire in losing, leaving, and serving in Jesus' name. The key image/metaphor for this section is that of a doctor's prescription for health (contrasted with a job description). Many find this description life-giving and freeing, and it can make leadership more accessible for others.

Read Together: Psalm 50:7-15, Isaiah 64:4, Luke 12:35-38, and Acts 17:22-25

The goal for this section is to help participants understand that God doesn't need them but instead wants to heal them by inviting them into ministry & leadership (here framed as "building community").

Discussion Questions

1. What characteristics of God do you see in these passages?
 - *Creator*
 - *Owner of all*
 - *Not hungry or needy*
 - *Deliverer*
 - *Works for those who wait*
 - *Serves*
 - *Gives everything to all*
2. What is God's complaint in Psalm 50?
 - *They bring sacrifices that they think God needs.*
 - *What happens to God when he's treated this way? He gets sarcastic...*
 - *Why does God focus on the best bull? How is this significant in their context?*
3. What do these Scriptures say God wants from his followers?
 - *Offerings of thanksgiving*
 - *People to pay vows (commitments to God, generosity to God)*
 - *Call on God when they are in trouble*
 - *Wait for God – trust God*
 - *Be ready / stay alert for God's presence*
4. What does each passage have in common? What surprising picture of God emerges?
 - *Each passage emphasizes that God does not need humans.*
 - *Each passage contains a 'dramatic reversal': God is exalted, but instead he is the one who delivers, works, serves. Where do you see this dramatic reversal in the other passages?*
 - *God is the master who serves.*
 - *God does not need us!*

Summary: It's a picture of a doctor-patient relationship. When you go to the doctor, what are you saying – "I need help, I need you to do what I cannot do for myself." Who is the greatest? The doctor. And who is the servant? Also the doctor.

Job Description vs. Doctor's Prescription

The goal for this section is to present two contrasting pictures of our relationship with community: viewing contributing to community as a "job description" (something we have to do or do for rewards) vs. a "doctor's prescription" (something God does for us). Have the students read the handout for a few minutes and then ask some discussion questions:

Community matters. But it's not something we do for God (or ourselves) – it's something God does for us!

	Job Description	Doctor's Prescription
Goal	Receiving payment in the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approval or respect from others/God • Giving God what we "owe" or "should" • Finding a community where we feel comfortable or have our needs met 	Receiving health, the rewards associated with trusting God and loving people. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing from selfishness and self-focus • Healing from fear of risk and vulnerability
Qualifications	"Well-qualified" builders only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible knowledge, expertise, or experience • Extroverts & confident people have the most to offer • You need to know exactly what to do before contributing 	Everyone is a builder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone has gifts to offer God's community • All you need is evidence of God's work in your life
Requirements	Job requirements: What leaders do <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duties and commitments • Focus is on tasks and time spent on the community • Responsibility 	Prescription for health: What leaders need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and partnership • Focus is on willingness to grow as a disciple • Accountability
Attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is something God gives me for me. • I must get enough out of this community before I contribute • How are my needs being met? What is worth doing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God calls me to love and build this community • I grow the most when I invest in the people around me • How is God serving me in my role here? How am I being healed?
Motivation	Obligation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I lead because I feel like I had to say "yes" • I invite others because it's expected • "Why did you miss IV this week?" • "You should really go to this retreat; it will be good for you" 	Calling <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I lead out of a sense of calling to be a leader • I invite others because Jesus invites • "I missed you at IV this week! How are you doing?" • "A bunch of us are going to this retreat, will you come too?"

Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride • Resentment • Burnout • Loneliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gratitude • Humility • Lasting motivation • Committed community
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Cor 11 – Self-serving approach to the church • Mark 6:30-44 – Jesus has compassion on the crowd • Acts 5 – Ananias and Sapphira treat the community selfishly & deceptively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 Cor 12 – Other-serving approach to the church • Mark 6:30-44 – disciples sending the crowd away • Acts 4 – whole church together in serving, worshipping, giving, and sharing

Discussion Questions

1. What sticks out to you about these two mindsets?
2. Where have you (or have you seen) people operating in the first mindset?
3. What does that tend to do to them? To their community?

Application

Make space for time for each participant to reflect on the list again in God's presence (listening prayer may be appropriate here). Ask each person to identify one way God is inviting them to move from 'Job Description' to 'Doctor Prescription' this week.

LEADER AS PATIENT PART 2 | Leader's Guide

How God uses community building to heal us

Note

This is the second part of "Leader as Patient" which focuses on the relationship between our individual needs and a witnessing community.

Read Together: Mark 8:34-38, 10:28-31, and 10:41-45

The goal for this section is to help participants understand how partnering with God to help build witnessing communities is the way to meet their deepest needs for healing, community, and significance.

Discussion Questions

1. What does each passage have in common?
 - *Teaching is for the disciples, but describes a universal dynamic*
 - *Universal invitation, "anyone" who wants, etc, repeated throughout*
 - *Jesus draws out their desires/behaviors*
 - *Each involves a paradox – to achieve what you want/desire, you have to leave it behind*

2. What motives does each passage address?
 - *Mark 8: Life, and true life – found by embracing suffering/loss*
 - *Mark 10: Security – financial and relational security, home, family, all represent security in this culture. Jesus says security is found by taking risks and leaving the things we hold most dear.*
 - *Mark 10: Belonging – a life of interdependence and significance, found by serving others.*

Jesus doesn't say, "I'm shocked that you want life, security, belonging! So Unchristian." He doesn't scold them for wanting those things. He points them towards where those things are truly found – in following him. He wants them to want these things, but to receive them through the paradoxical, upside-down life of faith that follows the example of Jesus.

3. Fill out the chart from the Participant's Guide together:

The Sacrifice	The Reward
Mark 8:34-38 <i>Embrace suffering for Jesus</i>	<i>Real life that begins now & lasts forever</i>
Mark 10:28-31 <i>Leave behind security</i>	<i>Security in this life & after the resurrection</i>

<p>Mark 10:41-25 <i>Leave behind self-centered relationships</i></p>	<p><i>A life of serving others in a way that helps them meet Jesus; real interdependence; healing from self-centeredness</i></p>
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Each of these passages invites us to live our lives as Jesus’ disciples by spending our time, energy, and resources on behalf of others and the kingdom of God. In each of these passages, Jesus invites us to find our life, security, and belonging the way he did – through the ‘paradoxical’ way of losing, leaving, and serving.

Community is not something we find for ourselves. Community is something God does for us. And God calls us to be a part of that work.

4. What desires/wants/needs usually hold you back from investing deeply in your community? How might those things actually be found by following the path of Jesus?
5. Which scene and invitation from Mark most strongly appeals to you?

Putting It Into Practice

The goal for this section is to apply the ‘doctor’s prescription’ framework for community building to several concrete examples. Bullet points are provided in each case study for the leader to make sure important themes are highlighted & discussed.

Chose 1-2 of the following stories to discuss as a group:

- How do you see examples of the two mindsets we studied today in each person?
- How might God use the opportunity in each story to heal the person doing the community building?
- In each case, what is the desire or need that God is meeting through that person’s service? What does that say about God?

Jay is nervous about leading a small group at Fall Retreat. He isn’t sure he’ll be able to get as much out of the retreat if he’s leading. He remembers when he went to Fall Retreat as a freshman his group was awkward and so he is anxious about being responsible for the new students in his small group. But despite his fears, Jay’s small group has an incredible weekend together and Jay can clearly see how God was at work in their lives.

- *Job description mindset – Jay thinks influencing others/responsibility is a barrier to getting his own needs met*
- *Responsibility feels risky*
- *Jay finds that his needs are met when he helps build community*
- *Doctor’s prescription – Jay is healed from some past disappointment with others when he invests in community*

Sarah has been struggling to make friends her first semester at school, even in her InterVarsity chapter. She is glad to be invited to the chapter Super Bowl Party but decides not to attend. She doesn’t really like football and so doesn’t think she’ll have much fun. Plus, she is really stressed out about her test on Monday afternoon and wants to study.

- *Doesn't want to step out of comfort/preference zone to invest in friendships*
- *Prioritizing reducing academic stress over potential community time (has the whole weekend to study!)*
- *Could also discuss the chapter working hard to include her / make the party be less football-centric*

Joel loves coming to Core Group every week because he appreciates the space to pray, reflect, and catch up with friends that he doesn't see often because of his busy schedule. Since it's his only time with his Christian community during the week, he usually tries to sit with his friends so he can reconnect with them and process with people he already feels comfortable with.

- *Job description: Community is for meeting my own needs*
- *Mark 10 – Jesus says the path to greatness is to serve others; Joel is serving himself.*
- *Can compare to disciples/Jesus difference in Mark 6*

Mary, a Bible study leader in the chapter, realizes that she learns more preparing for Bible study than the rest of the students do from the discussion. She has been feeling guilty because she gets more out of the experience than they do, though her intention was to serve. She wonders if she should even continue being a leader.

- *That's okay! Mary should feel great about meeting God through building God's community*
- *Mary shouldn't step down from leadership if she feels like she isn't "cutting it" (Job description/resume mindset)*
- *Mary could work on her leadership skills if she wants to*

Application Questions

1. What is one way God is expanding your perspective on building Christian community this week?
2. Where have you had a 'job description' mindset about community? What is one concrete step you can take towards change?
3. What deep need do you feel like is going unmet in your life? How might God want to meet that need through your Christian community?