



SKILL 11

What To Do When Your Group Attendance Declines

- Pray for God's guidance and discernment
- Ask for some council and different perspective from your coach
- Try to discern what the possible reasons might be:
 - Is this person or persons not coming due to unexpected life circumstances?
If so, encourage, pray and care for them; let them know they are missed and welcome back whenever their life circumstance changes
 - Are they not coming due to a group offense or conflict with someone(s) in the group?
If so, try to encourage a Biblical response: pray, forgive, and approach the person or persons which caused the offense and try to work it out to a Biblical resolution or restoration
 - Are they not coming because they simply don't fit in or feel comfortable with the group?
If so, try to discern how long they have been coming and the group dynamic and group life stages and experiences.
If they have been attending for only a short time, ask them to prayerfully consider trying the group for a bit longer and encourage them that it takes some time for strangers to connect and develop a level of comfort and trust. But that is what God desires: unity from of diversity. When this happens, they may actually develop some life long friendships, if they hang in there for a bit longer. Ensure them that if after that time, they still don't feel they fit in; you will be more than happy to help them find another group.
If they have been part of group for some time and they are no longer attending because they feel they don't fit in, then acknowledge it and give them freedom to try another group.

Assure them that you will not be offended; rather you are more concerned that they get in a group they feel good about so they can grow spiritually.

-Is the group losing steam because it's that time of the year? There are natural times that are not conducive to group meetings: Holidays, summers when people take vacations and April and May when school things are winding down and people are tired! Beware of these times and sometimes the best thing to do is simply take a break as a group and start back up in the Fall (August/Sept) or Spring (Jan/Feb) when people are more excited to start things again!

-Is the group losing steam because you are losing steam? As the leader goes, so goes the group. If you do not have the energy to give what you know your group deserves and the group is suffering as a result. Talk with your coach. Maybe you need to take a break and re-energize. Maybe you need to try another role such as a coach and allow another person in your group to lead. Maybe you're doing other things that your coach may be able to take off your plate. In any case, talk to your coach!

-What ever the reason, best thing to do is: Call the person or persons not attending and let them know they are missed and you are praying for them. Then have a heart to heart, asking them why they have not been able to attend group time? Assure them it is ok, whatever the reason, and give them permission to take a break from the group for awhile or that it is ok if they want to try another group. Don't make them feel guilty. But encourage them, that at some time, they need to commit to a group in order for grow spiritually. This is your ultimate concern, not whether they come to your group or not. Rather, they get in one that they feel good about and can grow.