



Leader Care: Kindness and Boundaries

By Mary Jane Hamilton, Leader Training Assistant

Over the years I have learned a thing or two about what it

means to take care for myself during those twelve weeks of leading groups. In my early years of leading I had a tendency to be available 24/7. I thought that was what it took to be a "good" group leader. I was driven by urgency to come through for others by listening, calling, meeting and processing. This urgency was costly to my family and me. Something needed to change. I wonder: How many of you are caught-up in the urgency of leading groups and meeting other's needs? Do you know what it means to be kind to yourself?

Let's take a look at what it means to put into place some good boundaries that promote change with less urgency and more kindness for you and others. Following are some ideas to consider for good boundaries as you take on the responsibility of leading a group:

- Begin your groups with an emphasis on good boundaries: Starting on time and ending on time.
- Go over the Grace Group agreement and be mindful of: What will I do to keep my group on track with this agreement?
- Set the example of being respectful of your group members' personal space: touching, hugging and engaging them in/outside the group.
- Be intentional about the amount of time you will spend with your

co-leader during the process time and outside of group.

- Develop a reasonable time frame you will spend on weekly calls to your group members. Consider: Kindness and efficiency. Mentor yourself to know what is personal encouragement and what needs to be brought back to the group. Refrain from making these calls a personal "counseling" time for them. Ask yourself: Will I entertain calls initiated by group members? If yes: What boundaries will I have for those calls?
- Determine if you will meet with group members outside of group. What do you want this time to look like?
- Consider cultivating friendships/relationships other than those involved in groups and ministry.

When the 12 weeks are over, allow some time and space between groups and meeting with members. Know that there can be a pull to continue on meeting outside of group, ask yourself, "Is this the best way to be kind to myself and to them?"

As a leader it is always important to remember that God is the One who ultimately cares, who does the healing and brings about change in our group members. He is not requiring you to run yourself ragged to make this happen. He loves you and He knows your story. Continue in kindness and allow Him to bless you as you labor in love for Him and others. 🌿



Leaving a Legacy of Care

By Sandy Burdick, Ministry Founder

"What am I leaving behind?" That was a question I asked myself as I faced my cancer diagnosis and my mortality last year.

Recently I read with new understanding the last words of Paul in II Timothy 4 and was reminded that he was able to say: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith." Then he talked about relationships and sent words to his dear friends and even named his disappointments. He knew he would be martyred soon.

In 2008 I got ready to die, but I am still alive. Thank you, Lord. What I learned was that, like Paul, there was great satisfaction in knowing that I have fought the good fight in this ministry and other areas where I have cared for the body of Christ. Whatever it cost in time, energy, money, struggle and warfare was worth it.

To touch one life for Christ, only one, would be enough, but in this ministry we get to see a ripple effect. The Lord continues to show me the rip-

ple effect of caring as people surprise me by expressing gratitude. Men and women I don't even know have written, stopped me on the street and called to say thank you. Just last week a merchant in our area said to me; "there is no charge for this." I stood with my money in my hand as he said, "Without the ministry of your family in my life, I would not be here. Thank you."

This ministry happens when a Good Samaritan does not pass by, but is willing to stop for the wounded, do what he can and then pay the innkeeper for care that goes beyond what he can offer. Who am I in this story?

- The one who passes by?
- The one who stops, ministers and gives money?
- The one who is wounded?
- The inn keeper who cares for the wounded for a season?

I have been all four. I have learned that passing by is something I do not want to be guilty of at this stage of my life.

And so I say, thank you Jesus. Thank you, God, for calling us all to minister grace to others. My friends, I pray that we will all end well. And we will all be able to say, it was a good fight that we have engaged in. Our investments in people with our time and money are our legacy. We can't out give God. He has a crown He is waiting to give us. 🌿

