

# Heart to Heart

A quarterly newsletter of Open Hearts Ministry

Spring 2004

## Growing Ministry by Developing Leaders

by Mark Bonham, Executive Director

The story typically goes something like this. You realized either before you came or during your participation at SALTS (Survivors of Abuse Leadership Training Seminar) that you needed to enter your life experiences for your own benefit. In the process of doing this with a group of fellow travelers, you begin to long for an authentic community that would pursue hearts with grace, compassion and truth. You begin to long for more for yourself and for those around you. But who else shares your longing?

A year goes by, maybe two. You have either met with one or two others and reviewed the material, or you have returned to SALTS with a friend. Now you have a co-leader and you are eager to see a group form. God brings others into your life who have stories that need to be shared. You form a small group and you spend twelve weeks covering the material. There are some rough spots along the way, but overall it is a positive experience. One or two participants really seem to have made good progress on the healing journey and you see leadership potential. You know that your community is ripe with need for more of these small groups. You are overwhelmed with the needs and with your own inadequacy to meet them. Where do you go from here?

Look at what Jesus did. In Matthew 4:23 - 5:2 we read that Jesus had a large crowd of "wounded" following him. Some had experienced his healing touch. They told others and people came out of the woodwork. Jesus could have been busy 24 hours a day in his personal ministry, but the passage says that when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down.

When was the last time that you withdrew to a place where you could get perspective on what God is doing in your life and ministry? Does it seem like a luxury to stop what you are doing and sit down? In the midst of demanding ministry, Jesus often withdrew to a quiet place to pray and listen for the Father's voice. After a bit his disciples came to him and he began to teach them the values of the kingdom, which we call the beatitudes.

(Cont. on page 4)

### Our Mission:

"Ministering to the abused through the love of Christ and equipping others to do the same."

*"You are overwhelmed with the needs and with your own inadequacy to meet them. Where do you go from here?"*

### A Look inside...

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## What does Good Group Leadership Look Like?

by Sandy Burdick, Ministry Director

Good group leadership is evident when participants show a desire to be a part of the healing process of others: they talk to each other, laugh with each other, cry, encourage and expose places where repentance is needed. In other words they bond. Co-leaders facilitate interaction rather than do all the work themselves. If a leader realizes she/he is working too hard, it is necessary to put the ball in the court of the group members who, we assume, want to grow and change.

When I am visiting groups, I look for group leaders who share in the process and who talk to each other in front of the group about what direction they need to go. They both enter issues, and respect each others strengths and cover each other's weaknesses.

Here are some common weaknesses I see in group leadership:

*1. Spending too much time with one person before inviting the group into the interaction.* A group leader should be thinking all the time, "what would it mean to put my arms (figuratively) around this group and bring them together" rather than single out people who may have need of special attention. For example, a woman in group had just told her story of rape that occurred 3 months earlier. The group seemed to be stunned. The leaders noticed that one woman was crying; another was frozen. Some were on the verge of tears. One leader said to the woman, "Please look up and see what your friends here are feeling for you." Then she gently drew out what each woman was thinking. There were such compassionate and good responses. One had her own story of rape and was willing to tell it next. Leaders don't need to respond to the whole story. Two or three sentences can be said followed by drawing the rest of the group in. "Laura really needs to hear some words from all of us."



*2. Telling someone else how they should feel.* For example, "You must feel very angry about that." Better: "I am feeling angry about what happened to you." "How do you feel?" "How did you feel at that time?"

*3. Processing too soon.* The first two or three sessions, simply gather data in your mind or on your processing sheet about what you see. When people are feeling safer, you can ask them if they would like to hear what you have observed. To process too soon is to move too fast. Slow is better.

*4. Not processing the here and now.* We advise leaders to sit across the table from each other so that all faces can be seen. When one leader is addressing a member, the other needs to watch the body language and faces of the rest of the group. Because two group leaders were sitting together, they both missed the agony on Sue's face. When I called attention to that, the leaders drew her out and heard some very important things. We can miss opportunities by not being alert or being afraid to enter the unknown. "Can you talk to us about what is going on for you right now?" would be a way to process.

*5. Failing to address the dignity of each person.* A man in group was wrestling with entering the chaos of life and the group process. When at last he tiptoed in, spoke a few words and leaned forward, the leader saw it and spoke into it. "Robert, I am so glad you have stepped up to bat. We don't want to miss what you have to say. I'll bet there is more in there and I want to hear it."

*6. Failing to process with each other as leaders and missing the good input that each person has.* It takes two to observe, remember what happened and know what needs to be prayed about.

If you are training leaders locally, I believe it is important to go over the Function of a Group leader lesson in the back of the SALTS manual, Page 210. The forms that we use for SALTS training can be emailed to you from our office if you request them. In their pre-meeting leaders can discuss these principles every time a new session begins.

In pre-meeting leader time I would go over the questions the lesson provokes and prime the pump for the meeting by helping leaders be honest about where they are on that topic.

Always talk about shame and it's affect on leaders and how to address it. This is found on page 186 in the SALTS Manual. In fact, try using all the lessons in the leader training session of the manual.

If group leaders are having difficulty with each other, plan a time other than your leader meeting to discuss this. Unnecessary disruption just before group can derail a leader from her/his calling for that evening.

*Good leadership develops as our hearts are open to giving to and receiving from one another.*



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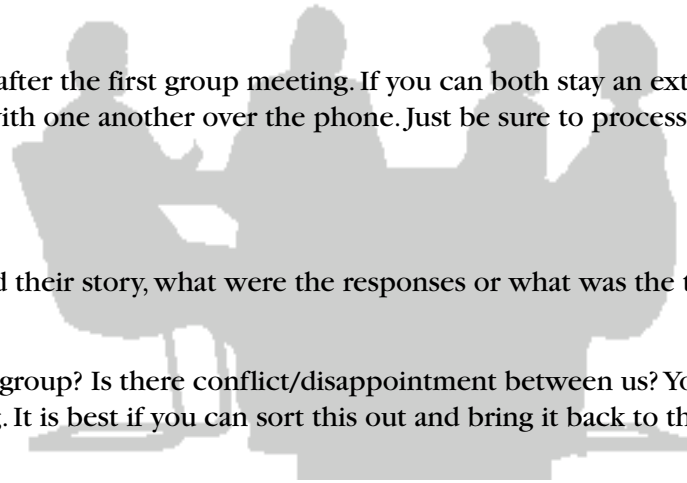
## How to PROCESS group with your co-leader...

by Mary Jane Hamilton, SALTS trainer and OHM mentor.

Processing your group with your co-leader should start after the first group meeting. If you can both stay an extra 15 minutes, great, but if time is short, you can process with one another over the phone. Just be sure to process. It is important!

Following are some questions to help you process:

- What happened in group? This could include who told their story, what were the responses or what was the tone of the group.
- How does our relationship with each other affect the group? Is there conflict/disappointment between us? Your group will pick up on how the two of you are relating. It is best if you can sort this out and bring it back to the group if necessary.
- How did my own style of relating help/hinder the group? Be honest and open for feedback.
- Keep track of who is there and who is not; look for patterns.
- How are you feeling as you leave group? This is a temperature check for the two of you to be honest with your feelings and what is going on for you.
- What information/observations do we need to keep in mind for each member? Make a list for each one. This becomes more important as the weeks go by because you will begin to see patterns developing with your group members that can be helpful for their recovery process.
- What affirmation do you have for each member, i.e. changes you see, vision you have, how they have been responding, etc.? This may require prayer and creativity. Remember that many of our participants have been beaten down through abuse and you may be the first to offer them hope.
- Who/what did we miss in group, and who/what do we need to pursue? Be aware of those who are quiet or seem distant in group. Be ready to pursue them with kindness and a soft touch. Romans 2:4
- Are there any loose ends to be dealt with next time?
- Do we need to talk with someone before our next session? Determine who needs a follow-up call during the week and decide who will call (maybe both of you should). After a member tells their story for the first time and/or you are sensing shame has surfaced, don't hesitate to call. A leader's reassurance can be powerful.
- What/who do we need to pray about between now and our next session? Make a list and keep it handy from week to week. It is encouraging to see how God answers our prayers.
- What assignments did we give out? This could be writing letters to abusers or bringing their pictures. Possibly you have requested that a member think about something in particular for the week...don't forget to follow-up on your request.



### Open Hearts Ministry Now Enrolled in Meijer Community Rewards!

- Join Meijer Community Rewards at [Meijer.com/rewards](https://www.meijer.com/rewards) or pick up an application at your Meijer store.
- **Use the code assigned to OHM: 378921.**
- Swipe your card whenever you shop at Meijers.
- We receive a percentage of your purchase totals and these funds will be used for SALTS Scholarships.
- Encourage friends, relatives, local group members to join.
- Questions? Contact OHM (269) 383-3597 or Meijer (800) 962-7011.

Not all of these questions will apply each week, but I encourage you to “go for it” when they do. As the weeks go by you will be glad you did. The answers will tell you a lot about your members and you.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

## In this Issue:

### Developing Leaders in Ministry

#### Developing Leaders (cont. from page 1)

When ministry was most challenging, Jesus focused on the development of his leaders. What did he teach them? He taught them about character necessary for impact. He taught them to move into difficult situations, rather than run. He taught them to enter conflict and he taught them relational truths. He taught them to pray, where to invest their lives, what to do when overwhelmed with worry and how to get ready to minister to others. Even as the crowds gathered, he focused on his leaders. At the end of three years he had 11 shaky leaders who took the ministry to heart and launched a movement that has impacted nations for over 2000 years.

In this edition of *Heart to Heart* we focus on what it looks like to develop leadership in the context of small group ministry. Mary Jane shares how to process with your co-leader for mutual development. Sandy shares out of her experience of visiting countless groups some secrets of good small group leadership.

We are committed to helping you grow and develop as a leader. We have begun to offer "Advanced Leader Training" at SALTS for alumni who are leading groups locally, want feedback on their leadership and desire to sharpen their skills. This is intensive training over eight days that we hope will deeply impact local ministries as leaders pass on what they have learned.

In addition we have been traveling around the U.S. doing leaders' retreats and on-site training for more established ministries. These are most typically week-end events with two or more of our more experienced trainers.

*Grace for the Wounded* workshops have been used very successfully to explain the ministry to local communities and area churches and to recruit new participants to small groups where leaders are ready to expand and grow.

Did you know that if you are forming a group and desire to have one of our experienced leaders mentor you and walk with you that we will help make that happen? Our leaders with the largest ministries have done this. Could that be one of the reasons for their success?

Please contact our office if you have specific interest in any one of these opportunities. The leader God uses will look well to the needs of those he or she is shepherding to insure that they are maturing as leaders themselves and able to offer life to others.

#### Important Dates to Remember

**April 26-May 1, 2004** - SALTS, Maranatha, Muskegon, MI.

**May 29, 2004** - Grace for the Wounded, Thunderbay, ON.

**October 11-16, 2004** - SALTS, Maranatha, Muskegon, MI.

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and order small group materials!**