

Discussion Guide

Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to lead a group of people to a deeper experience of community. We trust you will be blessed as you see God's power expressed through the lives of those in your care in more vibrant and fruitful ways.

Preparing for your introductory meeting

There are a few administrative points you will need to take care of to prepare for your introductory 3 Colors of Community group meeting:

- Obtain a copy of *The 3 Colors of Community* for each group member who will participate in the process.
- Print or email a copy of *The 3 Colors of Community Reading Guide* to each group member who will participate in the process.
- Read through the introduction to *The 3 Colors of Community* and familiarize yourself with the *Reading Guide* as well as the process for completing the *Communal Test* online (preferably) or in the book.

Leading your introductory meeting

Here with some important steps for your introductory meeting:

- Share with your group why you believe studying *The 3 Colors of Community* will be a transforming experience.
- Distribute copies of *The 3 Colors of Community* and the *Reading Guide*. Determine whether you will treat today or tomorrow as Day 1, depending on whether you meet in the morning or evening.
- Read together the book introduction: Let's talk about heaven and hell (pages 4-6). Invite comments about first impressions from the book.
- Draw the group's attention to the need for each person to complete their personal *Communal Test* in Week 2, Day 3 (referred to in the *Reading Guide*) and offer assistance to those who may need it.
- Spend some time praying together (and in future weeks) that the group will read the book with open minds and hearts and a willingness to act on that which convicts them.

After week 1 in the Reading Guide

Be selective with the following questions depending on the openness within your group and the time available in your meeting. Be ready to respond with your own personal answers to the questions.

Discussion questions

- When you think of a "small group", what values, components or purposes come to mind?
- What specific examples can you give of how sin breaks down community? What about examples relating to other forms of sin?
- How do you feel about the idea that the 7 Deadly Sins would lose their power if the corresponding aspects of healthy community were well-developed?
- Why do you believe that pride is said to be the root of all sin?
- What are your thoughts about the idea that sin is both *breaking the law* (requiring punishment) and *a sickness* (cured through healing)? In your mind, which of these two aspects most come to mind when reflecting on or experiencing the effects of sin?
- What examples can you think of where people (in or outside of the church) have tried to deal with sin by just telling people to stop it? What have been the results?
- What examples can you think of where people (in or outside of the church) have considered sin too great a challenge and have redefined it to make it go away? What have been the results?
- How do you feel about the idea that the energy that drives sin in people's lives is a God-given energy that has been used for the wrong purposes? What does this suggest to you about the potential for good if the energy behind the sin you see in your own life and in the world around you were to be transformed?
- Do you have any other comments from this week's readings?

Remind your group members to ask for help if they have any difficulty in completing the Communal Test this week.

After week 2 in the Reading Guide

Be selective with the following questions depending on the openness within your group and the time available in your meeting.

Highest energy discussion questions

- Without doing the Communal Test, were you aware of your highest energy?
- When you consider the term describing your highest energy, what thoughts or feelings come to mind? Primarily positive ones? Negative? Neutral?
- Are you fully aware that your drive behind this energy is God-given?
- When considering times that you have felt most alive, to what extent do you suspect that expressing this energy was a part of the experience? Please give an example.
- What thoughts and feelings does the key verse of Scripture relating to your highest energy evoke within you?

Greatest vulnerability discussion questions

- What is your reaction to what the test suggests is your greatest vulnerability?
- How do you typically react to people who share your vulnerabilities? Do you tend to understand them? Or are you even more critical toward them than to others? What could be the background of these reactions?
- What excuses for sin have you heard from others who have the same vulnerability as yourself?
- Try to give examples how your greatest vulnerability can harm your relationship with God, with others, and with yourself.
- Have you ever experienced that your greatest vulnerability seems to get worse when you merely try to avoid it? If so, how would you explain this phenomenon?
- Have you ever considered that your greatest vulnerability is just the flipside of your greatest potential contribution to community? What practical consequences can you draw out of this insight?

Potential contribution to community discussion questions

Consider the communal quality to which you have the highest potential to contribute according to the *Communal Test*:

- Describe one of the most inspiring examples of people living out that communal quality that you have encountered.
- What could you do to get training in that communal quality?
- How do you presently express your greatest energy in your small group, family, workplace, or church? How could you improve that in the future?
- (If your church is involved with the Natural Church Development survey and group members would be aware of the results) For all of the areas identified by the Natural Church Development survey, people with the corresponding energies are needed to help our church improve. What could you do in practical terms to invest your energies on a local church level?
- Which of the energies do you believe is most lacking in your small group? In your church? Do you believe that there are not enough people with these energies, or that they simply haven't identified these energies yet?
- Do you have any other comments from this week's readings?

After week 3 in the Reading Guide

Be selective with the following questions depending on the openness within your group and the time available in your meeting.

Discussion questions

- Having been aware of your *Communal Test* results for a little longer now, have you had any further insights that you would like to share with the group?
- What do you think about the suggestion that healthy community, or a healthy small group, is a window into heaven? What do you imagine that could look like? When have you experienced it?
- How do you feel about the reality that light is more powerful than darkness: that is, that light can dispel darkness but darkness cannot extinguish light? In what ways, if any, does this affect your approach to any darkness that surrounds yourself or others? What practical examples can you give?
- Can you relate to the concept of inner voices that whisper or shout at you in daily life? Are there any examples you could share? What, if any, connection can you see between inner voices that you experience and your highest energy?
- Do you have any other comments from this week's readings?

Reading the final chapter together

As a way of bringing together all that your group has studied and casting a vision of what they could become, read together the final chapter: *Christian community—a glimpse of heaven* (pages 141-144).

Discussion questions

- Has the idea of sin as a struggle shared by Christians and non-Christians alike, changed your picture of "evangelism" in any way? How so?
- What examples can you identify of where Christianity has been presented more as spiritual entertainment than as discipleship?
- What are you prepared to do to make an experience of heaven more accessible to those around you?
- Do you have any other comments from this final chapter or the teaching we have been through as a whole?

Next steps

What will be your next step based on what you have learnt during our time with this book (you may wish to suggest some of the following):

- Start more deliberately using your highest energy in daily life.
- Explore the *NCD Discipleship Resources* book or take the *eTest* that most relates to your highest energy (see the back of your Communal Summary Profile to see if that tool is available yet).
- Work through the "Inner Voices" exercise on your own or with some friends.
- Get involved in *Spiritual Change Talk*, referred to in *The 3 Colors of Leadership*.
- Take another friend through *The 3 Colors of Community*.

A final note to you the group leader

During your time leading this group, you may have felt a need or desire to grow in your ability to empower other people. If so, take the opportunity to explore *The 3 Colors of Leadership*. The *Empowerment Test* at the heart of this teaching will clearly show you the ways in which you already help people to experience transformation. It will also show you some specific simple ways that you could make an even greater difference in their lives.

Visit www.3colorsofleadership.org to find out more.