

THE FOURTH PHASE: BODY BUILDING

Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." When you launch, it will be a small group of people and immediately you will ask, "What do I do.?" Your task is not to build the church (Jesus does that), but it is to connect the group with Jesus so that He can grow them. Regardless of how small you may be, Jesus is there among all of you.

Two of the above phases are part of the body of Christ growing, that is prayer and fellowship. There are other steps necessary to enhance spiritual growth and development.

STEP ONE – When you meet start with fellowship, food, and fun. In other words, serve either a pot luck meal or have refreshments available and give ample time (30 – 45 minutes) of allowing the group just to fellowship with one another.

STEP TWO – Spend time in worship. (10 – 20 minutes) Starting out you have to use a CD player and a worship CD. This is the Lord's Church, in time He will provide someone on a consistent basis to help lead in worship. You may find that one of the ex-offenders or a family member that can play a musical instrument. Ask him or her to learn a new song or two (you choose) to play for next week.

STEP THREE – Spend time in God's Word. (10 – 20 minutes) Please note that the ex-offenders have not been attending a "free world church" while in prison and most likely their families were not attending the established church either. This gives you incredible freedom and flexibility in responding to the leadership of the Holy Spirit on how to apply God's Word. You can preach or do a type of interactive (hands on) group Bible Study. As one pastor has been quoted as saying, "Our goal in the use of Scripture in worship is not information, but transformation!"

James 1:22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **Do what it says.**

Your goal is to lead in the application of God's Word to the lives of people so that Jesus can transform their lives. How can this be done? One great resource is from Mission Arlington. Visit their website at <http://www.missionarlington.org/resources/curriculum/> for free curriculum that can be used for transformation. (As we become aware of other great resources, we will either list them in this paragraph or on the "Tools and Links" page of this website.)

You will find the basis for many of your Bible Studies and/or sermons to come from your daily time in God's Word. Don't ignore sharing with others what God is saying to you.

STEP FOUR – Offer an invitation. Invite those who have never trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior to do so. Invite those that need to recommit their lives to Christ to do so. Invite those who have an offering to give at this time. (Remember to set aside some of the offering for missions and new church starts.)

STEP FIVE – Observe the Lord's Supper and Baptism.

STEP SIX – Organize into a small group of 2- 3 people for accountability and evangelism. There is much to be said about the importance of being accountable to one another in your journey with Jesus. For about \$20, you can purchase a set of Life Transformation Group Cards from CMA Resources at <http://www.cmaresources.org/resources/> . **This is an excellent resource in leading a small group in accountability and in reaching the lost.** A life transformation group is also known as a small group, authentic faith group, etc., whose primary purpose is to meet weekly for spiritual development and accountability.

STEP SEVEN – Encourage a deep commitment to reading God’s Word on a daily basis. Commit as a small group to reading 3 – 5 chapters of the Bible every day. One suggestion is to have your small group read the book of Philippians every day for a week. When you meet the following week, talk about it. If no one completed the reading or if they just didn’t get a grasp of the book, start over. Reading the Bible changes lives.