

SAMUEL ODOH

# GRASSROOTS

MAKING DISCIPLES AND  
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH  
SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIPS





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## p r e f a c e

**B**efore the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, there will be a great harvest of souls. We have heard this prophecy over and over again, and we believe and eagerly anticipate its fulfilment. The truth is that it is already being fulfilled in many parts of the world. Multitudes are led to Christ every day. God has called you to be part of this great move. There are many people waiting for you to wake up to your spiritual responsibility and pull them out of the kingdom of darkness. God is using 'ordinary' men and women, filled of the Holy Ghost and wisdom to fulfil His end-time agenda. These men and women are predominantly in the marketplace. They are businessmen, professionals, and civil servants. Some of them are young people who are still in high school and tertiary institutions. They have caught the heart of God for the lost humanity and are passionate about bringing them to the saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The purpose of the 'Great Commission' book series is

to equip the saints to take their place in this end-time army of saviours who will deliver mankind from the tyranny of Satan. By the time you have read the books in the Great Commission series, you will be thoroughly furnished to fulfil your part of the Great Commission.

*Samuel Odoh*



# INTRODUCTION

One of the best platforms for making disciples is a small group fellowship (some people also call it a cell group). This is why every believer is supposed to run one at every point in time. As your disciples mature spiritually, you encourage them to start their own groups, and you start another one.

I am a product of a small group fellowship, that is why I know it is a powerful system for effective discipleship. The disciples of Jesus Christ were trained in a small group fellowship. After only three and half years of spending time with Jesus, the disciples were equipped to speak and act like Jesus. They operated in the supernatural like their discipler Jesus did. They were unstoppable.

**“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing**

**against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, “What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it.” – Acts 4:13-16**

As they continued using their master’s small group discipleship system, they made multitudes of disciples in a few years.

**“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”**

**Acts 2:46-47**

**“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.”**

**Acts 5:42**

I believe that if we will fulfil the command of making disciples OF ALL NATIONS (Matthew 28:19-20), we must shift our discipleship model from having a BIG celebration service on a Sunday morning to one where believers are equipped to have SMALL fellowship meetings in their homes, offices, shops, restaurants, schools, parks, etc. This is how we can reach our communities and the world, taking

the word of God outside the four walls of the church.

In this book, you will learn how to start and run one where you live or work. I will teach you what The Lord has taught me and what has worked for me. I led my first small group fellowship when I was about thirteen years old, and I have learnt a lot over the years. Some people I disciplined are now discipling other people. Pastors will discover how important the small group fellowship system is to the fulfilment of their ministry. Feel free to share this book with other believers and heads of ministry. Together we shall see many saved and brought to the knowledge of the truth.

## THE CHURCH CAN NEVER BE LOCKED DOWN

**“For where two or three gather in my name, there I am  
with them.” - Matthew 18:20**

The recent lockdowns around the world have shown us that the local church as we know it can be limited in its operation and in impact. It seemed like the preaching of the Gospel and making of disciples was put on hold. Many local churches have not been able to reopen after the lockdowns. Several new believers went back to the world. I know of a beloved brother who became a Muslim during the lockdown. Another vibrant brother was so challenged

financially and emotionally to the point that he began to question the integrity of scriptures. All of these happened because for a long time, our only idea of 'church' has been a building and a gathering. As soon as 'church' was shut down, we all went home. We waited and prayed for 'the church' to reopen so we would continue to fulfil our ministry. But that is not how it was ordained to be. The churches that were affected the most during the lockdown were the ones without cell groups. They only met on Sundays. A church I know grew supernaturally during the lockdown. The planted thousands of new churches and multiplied the number of their small group fellowships.

The church is a spiritual entity not a physical building. Church is anywhere two or three gather in the name of Jesus. What makes a church is the presence of Jesus Christ. It is the presence of Jesus Christ that makes our beautiful services on Sundays a church. This is why we can hold a church service in a basketball court, restaurant, conference center or a school classroom. When believers come together in the name of Jesus the venue becomes church, and the moment the gathering is over it returns to being a basketball court, soccer stadium, conference center or school classroom. When you meet with one or two other people in His name, Jesus is in your midst. When you preach, Jesus is preaching, when you lay hands on the sick, the healing virtue of Jesus is released to heal the sick.

This is good news. This means that we can have church every day of the week, and if our local church buildings are open, we come to celebrate with other believers on Sunday

or whatever day you meet. What an awesome privilege we have in the new covenant. We are not limited, we can meet with God anywhere, anytime, and everywhere. This is how the early church began. The believers had fellowship in their houses and just kept multiplying daily. Satan stirred up a great persecution against them but could not prevail. The more he tried to stop them, the more the number of disciples multiplied, and in a short time, almost the whole of the known world was reached with the Gospel. Their impact was unstoppable and undeniable. Even individuals like Philip took an entire city as one man with God (Acts 8:5-8).

Through the lockdowns, devil has showed us one of his strategies to limit the spread of the gospel in these last days. I must confess that he took a lot of us unawares. We did not see the lockdown coming, so we did not prepare adequately. Some local churches may never reopen. We will not allow this to happen again. We will receive strategies from heaven for small group fellowships. We shall train our people to lead Bible study and prayer meetings in their homes and workplaces. We shall equip every believer to effectively mentor and disciple another believer. We shall rediscover the power of two or three in agreement. We shall use every available medium to meet and help keep one another in the love of God. We will awake to our spiritual responsibility and be the hands and feet of Jesus, reaching out with compassion to our family members, neighbors, friends, and colleagues at work.

Each of us as members of the body of Christ must

become intentional about making disciples. We have been called, ordained, equipped, and deployed into society as salt and light to make disciples. We are not lacking in anything we need to get this job done.

**“As His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue” – 1 Peter 1:3**

Before the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the influence of His kingdom shall be felt in place on the face of the earth. His children will be divinely positioned everywhere to shed the light of the gospel, bringing many to salvation. There shall be a harvest of souls into the Kingdom from every nation, every tribe, every people, and every language on the earth. Each shall be represented before the throne of God in heaven.

**“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands.” Revelation 7:9**

The light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ will penetrate every ethnic group on earth before He returns. It is already happening. There is a mighty revival taking place in China despite the intense persecution of the saints. They are thousands of small group fellowship centers running underground in that nation, which are rapidly multiplying

strong disciples of Jesus Christ. Very soon there will be a spiritual revolution that the gods of China will not be able to resist. Nothing can stop the light of the Gospel. This is the era of dominion for the church and there is no system on earth can stop it.

In the remaining part of this book, I will be sharing with you strategies The Lord revealed to me on how to start and run small group (cell) fellowships that will multiply disciples and transform nations before the return of Jesus Christ.

# HOW TO START A SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP

**F**irst I want you to know that you only need one person to start a small group fellowship. That person could be your spouse, your child, a colleague at your workplace, a friend, your new convert, an employee, your gardener, your domestic assistant or even your parents. You can start with a member of your church. All you need is someone to start with. The next thing you need is a meeting place. It can be anywhere. You can meet in your house, a restaurant, your workplace, in a park, anywhere you find comfortable. You just must be consistent about the time and the venue. Just start. You don't have to make it a big deal. You don't need any special budget for refreshment or anything fancy. All you need is your voice.

After you have started, you can prayerfully begin to invite people to join you. Tell people who live or work around your venue that there is a fellowship near them. I will share some marketing ideas with you later.



Do not try to compel them to make any commitment, allow the Holy Spirit to do that. People avoid making commitments nowadays. Just make sure you pray and prepare for every meeting. If people get touched and blessed by your fellowship, they will come again and even invite other people to come along. Even if someone attends your fellowship for only one day, they should get something that will change their lives forever. People will get committed when they are blessed each time, they attend the fellowship.

Please make it easy for people to join your fellowship. People must never be asked to pay a membership fee. Also do your best to avoid putting any form of financial pressure on people in your fellowship. Never harass any member and ensure that no one is harassed or intimidated by another member.

I like to quickly highlight five purposes of a small group fellowship:

**1. Discipleship:** like I explained in the other book in this series 'Make Disciples', discipleship is a process of renewing the mind of a believer through the teaching of the word of God. The primary purpose of a cell group is to study the word of God. This is why the largest percentage of the fellowship time should be used for Bible study. If you read the book 'Make Disciples', you will learn what topics to cover in your Bible studies which will help your disciples grow spiritually.

**2. Prayer:** whenever two or more believers agree in prayer concerning anything God answers them. This is because wherever two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus,

God is there in the midst of them (Matthew 18:19-20). This is one of the advantages of fellowshiping with other believers. Encourage people in your fellowship to feel free to share their prayer requests. This is an important part of every meeting.

**3. Care:** God expects us to take genuine interest in the needs of other believers. You should look out for ways to meet the physical/material, emotional, and spiritual needs of the members of your fellowship. We are called to be there for one another. The Bible assures us that we shall reap the harvest of any good thing we do for any member of the body of Christ (Galatians 6:7-10). This is one of the purposes of a cell group fellowship.

**4. Evangelism:** we are saved to serve. Every believer is called to reach out to the world, restoring men back to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-20). A cell fellowship is a platform for discipling new converts. As a group, you should take the good news of Jesus Christ to people who live and work near the venue of your fellowship. As people respond to your preaching, you invite them to your fellowship meetings. Please download and read my other book 'How to Win Anybody to Christ' to learn some proven and practical principles of effective evangelism. If your cell group is not evangelising, it will not grow. If new believers are not added to your group monthly, you are failing in your discipleship.

**5. Spiritual capacity development:** in a small group fellowship, believers get to discover their spiritual gifts and abilities. Because the Bible study is usually interactive, each

one gets a chance to give their contribution in the discussions. This builds their confidence in their ability to understand and interpret the word of God. This is how believers develop their preaching and teaching skills. As your group goes out to evangelize, new believers learn how to share the gospel with unsaved people. Also, because everyone gets an opportunity to lead in prayer in a small group fellowship, the prayer life of believers are developed. As you will learn in this book, there should be a leadership structure in every cell group. Each member of the group is given a task and a responsibility, and the leader guides them to fulfil it. This gives them an opportunity to develop their leadership potentials.

Now that you understand the purpose of a small group fellowship, let me give you an idea of how to conduct a typical fellowship.

## **BUILDING A HEALTHY SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP**

If your fellowship is healthy it will grow. Let me describe what a healthy small group fellowship looks like and how to build one.

1. Members of the fellowship are committed to pursuing a loving relationship with God. They are encouraged and empowered to lead a sanctified life. They are committed to fellowshipping with God daily as individuals, studying the word and praying.

2. Members love and care for one another. Teach and motivate your members to look out for ways to help

one another spiritually, emotionally, physically, and materially. You should ensure that no one is taking advantage of another or defrauding other members. In a healthy small group fellowship, members visit one another. They take a genuine interest in other members' well-being.

3. Members grow spiritually. There should be noticeable spiritual growth in the lives of members. People's lives should be transformed when they join your cell group, as they apply the word of God they are taught.

4. Members are committed to winning the lost. Your fellowship members should be taught how to share the gospel with others and encouraged to do it. If there are no testimonies of people won to the Lord through your fellowship members, it is not healthy.

5. Members start their own small group fellowships. You should encourage your members to start their own groups where they live or work. This is why you should always share your teaching notes with them and encourage them to teach others what they learn in your fellowship meetings.

## PRACTICAL WAYS TO CARE FOR YOUR CELL GROUP MEMBERS

As you fellowship with God, He will keep revealing how to take care of your flock from time to time.

**"Tend (nurture, guard, guide, and fold) the flock of God that is [your responsibility], not by coercion or constraint, but willingly; not dishonorably motivated by**

**the advantages and profits [belonging to the office], but eagerly and cheerfully; Not domineering [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] over those in your charge, but being examples (patterns and models of Christian living) to the flock (the congregation). And [then] when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will win the conqueror's crown of glory." - 1 Peter 5:2-6 (AMPC)**

## **1. Pray for them**

Pray for them daily both in your private time of prayer and publicly. Pray that things will go well for them. pray for their spiritual growth. Intercede for their family members. Call them by name. pray for them in tongues and with your understanding. Command the devil to take his hands off them. Cover them in your prayers. If you know about any challenge they are facing, bring it before the Lord in prayer. If they have any character weakness, break it on the altar of prayer. Remember that you are a shepherd and a spiritual covering for members of your small group fellowship.

From my experience, when you begin to pray for someone, his heart is open to receive your ministry. Jesus prayed for His disciples. The Apostle Paul always prayed for his disciples in all his letters. Prayer is one of the highest expressions of love.

## **2. Visit them**

Make time to visit your members at home and their workplace. Of course, you should do it with wisdom. Don't just show up unannounced. if you are visiting a person of

the opposite sex, do not go alone. Be wise. Make your visit brief and impactful. Encourage them and pray for them. Endeavour to be there when they or a member of their family is sick or when there is a celebration. Be there for them in good and bad times.

If one is no longer attending the fellowship regularly, organize some other members to pay him a visit.

### **3. Ensure that they fellowship with God and other believers**

Encourage them to develop the discipline of fellowshipping with God daily in prayer and the study of the Bible. Keep them accountable. Help them to cultivate this habit. Also encourage them to faithfully attend the weekly services of their local church. If you belong to the same local church, always endeavour to look out for members of your fellowship in the services. If anyone is absent, call or visit him to find out if he is okay.

## **WHEN TO GIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION**

### **1. Birthday or Anniversary Celebration**

When a member of your fellowship or a member of his immediate family is celebrating their birthday, you should send them a special message or even pay them a visit. You should buy them a gift. It does not have to be expensive. What matters is the heart where it came from. Do the same when they are celebrating an anniversary. Say a special prayer for them on that day.

Health challenge: when a member of your fellowship falls sick, you should endeavour to reach out to him and pray for him. You must keep checking on him until he fully recovers. Remember you are a shepherd.

## **2. Marriage Problem**

When the marriage of a fellowship member is in crisis, you should intervene in every possible way to restore the relationship.

## **3. Sin**

when a member falls into sin, you should be there to restore him without judging him. Do not allow the devil to take advantage of the situation to take him out of the faith.

## **4. Bereavement**

When a member loses a loved one, you should be there to comfort him. The Lord instructs us to rejoice with those who rejoice and mourn with those who mourn.

# SMALL GROUP FELLOWSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH

**O**n the 9th day of March, 2021 the Lord said the following to me concerning the Cell Fellowship System in these last days: “The cell system is not optional in these last days. Any local church without a functioning cell system will not survive. They will be limited in impact and will not be able to fulfil the mandate I have given them. I will keep pruning every local church that bears fruit so they can bear more fruit. I will transfer my flock from churches that are not producing fruit to churches that bear fruit. There shall be a massive 'flock transfer' that will cause growing churches to keep growing.”

From the beginning of the church in the book of Acts, the small group system has been designed to function as the 'Discipleship Centers of the church. The most effective cell groups are usually ones connected to a local church.



**“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers...So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favour with one all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” - Acts 2:42, 46-47**

For the cell system to thrive and be as effective as God designed it to be, the Lead Pastor of every local church must be directly involved in running it. If that is not the case, it will not flourish. The Lead Pastor must be the Visionary Leader and Driver of the Cell Groups. I will discuss the role of the Lead Pastor in driving the cell system shortly.

The cell groups are the outreach arms of the church. Through them, the lives of men and women in the community are touched by the ministry of the church. Your church's impact should not only be felt in your weekly services. If that has been the case, you need to repent quickly and make urgent adjustments before God takes His flock from you to another church where they will be better taken care of. Church members are supposed to fellowship together at least once a week in small groups, under the leadership of Cell Leaders. They encourage and pray for one another to stand strong in the faith as the second coming of The Lord draws near.

**“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as in the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so**

**much the more as you see the Day approaching” -  
Hebrews 10:25**

In these days where governments are regulating large scale evangelistic outreaches, the local church's evangelism and outreach should be cell groups based. Cell groups should organise door-to-door outreach in the suburbs where they are located. They reach out to people with the message of the Gospel, healing the sick and ministering to their felt needs. When people respond to their ministry, they should invite them to their cell fellowship and to their local church's weekly worship services. Sometimes they should just have a specialized and creative outreach aimed at inviting new people to their cell group's fellowship meetings. They should only share the Gospel with them when they come to the fellowship. As new members come, they are encouraged to attend the church's weekly services where they will meet other members of the local church family.

**WHY EVERY CHURCH MUST HAVE A CELL  
SYSTEM**

I will briefly summarize some reasons why every local church must start running Cell Groups in the times we live in.

Number One, the church of Jesus Christ is the greatest threat to the devil, and he is afraid whenever two or three gather in the name of Jesus. This is why he fights

to keep church doors closed. If a church has a working Cell Group system, believers can still meet and fellowship even when churches are closed.

Secondly, a pastor cannot efficiently care for a large number of people by himself. With an effective Cell Group system, he will have several trained and anointed people who will help him shepherd the flock. So, the cell system makes for effective pastoral care at the grassroots and ensures no sheep are left unattended.

Thirdly, the most effective way to evangelize and disciple the communities the local church serves is through Cell Groups.

Fourthly, the Cell Groups become the local church's platform for leadership development, as members of the congregation get opportunities to use their gifts and talents to bless other members of the body of Christ. Potential leaders are identified and engaged in various leadership capacities in small groups. In that way, people who were ordinary church attendees become impactful leaders and blessings to the community.

Fifthly, people are taught better in small group settings as they have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the word of God. Because of the size of the people in attendance at a regular Sunday service, for example, and because of the limited time of the service, people do not get a chance to ask questions and get clarifications after a sermon or a teaching session. In a small group, the leaders ensure that everyone understands what is being discussed, and people can even be taught in their local languages.

Finally, a local church grows as the Cell Groups grow.

As people evangelize their suburbs and bring the new converts into their fellowships to be discipled, they eventually become members of the local church. So, if church growth is desired, strategic establishment of the cell system should be a priority.

## **THE LEAD PASTOR'S ROLE IN RUNNING THE CELL SYSTEM**

The success of the cell system in a local church is largely dependent on the commitment and competence of the Lead Pastor. From my experience, if the Lead Pastor is not directly involved in the running of the cell system it will be limited in growth and impact. If the Lead Pastor is not the founder of the church, he must be given the freedom to run the church's cell groups as the Lord leads him. The anointing to lead the cell groups is on him by virtue of his appointment as Lead Pastor. The founders of the church should encourage him to let it flow. Let's look at some of the roles of the Lead Pastor in running the cell system.

### **Ensuring Soundness of Doctrine**

The Lead Pastor should ensure that Cell Leaders teach sound and accurate lessons. In some cases, especially when the Cell Leaders are not yet very mature in the faith, the Lead Pastor should produce teaching outlines for the weekly small group fellowships. Cell Leaders should undergo some training to go through the teaching manuals. This will enable them to gain a proper understanding of the message they are going to be teaching.

**“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” - 2 Timothy 2:2**

There is nothing wrong with having a discipleship Bible study manual. Remember that the purpose of Christian ministry is to make disciples of all nations. So, every local church should develop a curriculum for this purpose. If you do not know how to develop one, you can get one from another ministry. By all means, the Lead Pastor should ensure that what the Cell Leaders teach the people is biblically sound. He should gently correct any Cell Leader teaching something wrong.

### **Leadership Development and Training**

The Lead Pastor should be sensitive to the Holy Spirit to identify individuals within the local church who can lead cell groups. The people may not look like it at the moment, just like the disciples Jesus Christ chose. They were a bunch of imperfect and unlearned men, but Jesus made great apostles out of them.

**“Now when they saw the boldness and unfettered eloquence of Peter and John and perceived that they were unlearned and untrained in the schools [common men with no educational advantages], they marvelled; and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.”**

Acts 4:13 (AMPC)

I sense that I should make this point clear. Do not

wait until God sends you Bible School graduates before appointing Cell Leaders. Use the anointing of God on your life and office to equip them for the work of the ministry. The success of your ministry is largely determined by the number of other ministers you are able to raise. The Lord will send you mighty men and women to help you disciple His flock. Some of them will come to you like David's mighty men came to him – battered, beaten and in distress; it is your responsibility to recognise their divine potential and make mighty men and women of God out of them.

**“And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.” - 1 Samuel 22:2**

After David has imparted some knowledge and skills to these 400 nonentities, they became men of great military exploits. Take some time to read about their uncommon military accomplishments in 2 Samuel 23:8-39.

Develop a solid walk with God by spending time studying His word and praying in the spirit and in your understanding. This will help you to be sensitive to the guidance of The Holy Spirit in all aspects of your ministry. Help the weak cell leader become strong. Be patient with them as they grow into the mighty under-shepherds God has called them to be. Do not wait for the 'perfect' Cell Leaders from heaven. Instead, allow The Holy Spirit to teach you how to turn 'raw materials' into vessels of honour, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

You will have to conduct leadership development meetings with your leaders monthly where you equip them spiritually and otherwise for greater impact in their ministry. Teach them better ways to shepherd the people. Evaluate your ministry strategies to know what to stop doing and what to keep doing. Organize empowerment sessions that teach them how to use social media to make disciples, how to hold cell group meetings online, etc. Keep your cell leaders on the cutting-edge. This will demand continuous personal development.

### **Vision Casting**

As the Lead Pastor, God expects you to wait on Him and receive His vision for the growth and development of every aspect of your local church. This includes the cell system.

**“I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected. Then the Lord answered me and said: “Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it.” - Habakkuk 2:1-2**

God will always reveal His plans for a local church to the spiritual head of that local church. He expects him to share them with his leaders and congregation. You must have a vision for the growth and multiplication of the cell groups in your church and a plan for achieving that vision as well. Cell leaders should be able to start another cell group before the end of one year, for example. Vision imparts energy and motivates action. Let the people you lead know where you are taking them and get them excited

about getting there. It is important that everyone sees himself as a stakeholder in God's agenda for the church. If you communicate the vision of the cell system that God has given you, and let the people see what is in it for them and the community, they will own the vision and be willing to be part of its fulfilment.

### **Maintaining momentum and motivation**

Evangelism and discipleship are spiritual warfare. The growth of cell groups threatens Satan and his kingdom because through it the light of the Gospel invades territories where he has dominated. Cell groups take the Gospel where the people are instead of waiting for them to come to the church to hear the Gospel. Satan will definitely try to resist the growth of the system. He will stir up a lot of persecutions and create difficulties that would discourage the Cell Leaders and members of the cell groups. This will slow down the growth and impact of cell groups. This is why the Lead Pastor must be on his feet to lead his flock in prayers to resist the devil. He must stop all his manoeuvres. The Lead Pastor must be the 'Chief Prayer Warrior' of the church, ensuring that the gates of hell do not prevail against the church.

The Lead Pastor should develop intercessory guidelines to give prayer directions to the leaders and members of the congregation every week. In 2019 when I was privileged to serve as the Cell Groups Coordinator at a church in South Africa, I worked with the Lead Pastors to produce prayer points for the week (two prayer points per day, Monday to Friday) and we saw God increase the church in a significant way. Our cell groups grew in number



and impact. Prayer limits the devil's influence and keeps him off your territory.

**“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” - James 4:7**

Constant prayer will help to maintain the growth of the church and cell groups. Every resistance to successful discipleship is destroyed on the altar of prayer. Stony hearts are turned to hearts of flesh, the blindfolding weapons of the devil are destroyed so that the light of the glorious Gospel can penetrate the hearts of men. A ‘prayerless church’ will be a weak church. If the Lead Pastor does not lead his congregation in prayer consistently, they will lack impact and influence. If you are a Lead Pastor and need help with leading your church in prayer, contact me and I will be happy to help you.

Leading people is not easy. Making disciples is very demanding. This is why the Lead Pastor should encourage his Cell Leaders. He must never criticise his leaders harshly. As a loving shepherd, he must be gentle. If they make mistakes, he should correct them with love. Many of his Cell Leaders will be learning on the job, so he must be patient with them as they grow. If they are discouraged, minister to them until they are restored and burning with zeal and enthusiasm again.

### **Motivating Evangelism Outreaches**

The Lead Pastor has the greatest spiritual authority in his local church. This puts him in a position of great spiritual influence whether he knows it or not. His words and actions

carry an enormous amount of weight, especially if his ministry impacts his congregation positively. Like I wrote earlier, church evangelism outreach should be cell-based. The Lead Pastor should always teach his leaders and members of his congregation that reaching out to the lost is their covenant responsibility as believers.

**“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.”**

2 Corinthians 5:18-20

Reaching out to the lost with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is every believer’s responsibility and calling. If the Lead Pastor teaches this consistently, and exemplifies it by being a soul winner himself, the leaders and the congregation will catch it and do the same. If the Lead Pastor does not teach it, they will not do it. If the Lead Pastor only teaches it but does not practice it himself, they will not do it as they ought to. A soul-winning pastor will have a soul-winning congregation.

The Lead Pastor should motivate and inspire his leaders and members of his congregation by teaching them the blessings that accompany serving God in the area of soul winning. He should share his testimonies of how God has blessed him since he became committed to winning the

lost from the pulpit and encourage others to do the same. He must constantly build his people's expectation to receive blessings from God whenever they go out to reap the harvest of the lost.

**“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.” - John 4:35-36**

Everyone who wins souls enjoy the blessings of God. They enjoy supernatural health, financial prosperity, divine favour, fruitfulness, long life, supernatural protection, and several other blessings. The Lead Pastor should search for scriptures that promise these blessings and share them with his congregation to keep them motivated to win the lost.

### **Administrative oversight**

The Lead Pastor must be up to date with what is happening in every cell group. This may sound like a lot of work, but with a solid system in place, it will be the easiest thing to do. I will share with you how to put an effective system in place for smooth Cell Group administration.

The cell leaders must be accountable to the Lead Pastor. One time when I coordinated the cell groups for a church, I set up a weekly reporting system for Cell Leaders. We supplied each leader with a monthly report sheet where they captured how many people attended the weekly

fellowship meeting, how many new members they had, how many were absent and the reason for their absence and how many people received salvation that week. They were made to capture that information after each meeting on that sheet and submit it at the end of the month. We also got a special WhatsApp number where the Cell Leaders were mandated to send a report of the number of people in attendance, the number of people absent and the number of people who got saved and the number of new members added to their cell group, within 24 hours after the cell fellowship. The Cell Group Coordinator should forward the weekly report to the Lead Pastor. This way, he knows what is happening and how to intervene and assist Cell Leaders who are struggling. Every pastor must develop a reporting system that best suits his ministry's operations.

The Lead Pastor should always remember that the life and strength of his church is not determined by what happens at the weekly Sunday/Celebration Service. Instead, it is determined by what happens at the grassroots - small groups. Small groups are where discipleship and shepherding happen. That is where people can fellowship intimately. Real growth occurs at the cell level. Just like the growth of the human body happens because of the growth of the cell, the growth of a local church is determined by the growth of small group fellowships. The lead pastor should invest a lot of his time, energy, and resources in ensuring that cell groups grow strong and healthy. Even if he delegated the Cell Group administration to someone else, he must always keep an eye on it.

# EFFECTIVE CELL GROUP LEADER

**E**very cell leader is a pastor in God's sight. A pastor is simply a shepherd; one who cares about other people's spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. The world is in dire need of faithful, committed, and compassionate shepherds.

**“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into the harvest.”**

**Matthew 9:36-38**

This is still the cry of God's compassionate heart today. The world is rapidly heading for destruction. It is said that in 24 hours on the planet, over 155,000 people die.

In every 2 seconds about 2 people die. As you read this someone somewhere is slipping into eternity without God. This does not make God happy. He gave His only son to pay a painful price for the sin of men so they would not perish in hell. Some of the people dying now were ordained to be great evangelists who would have brought multitudes into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, but no one reached out to them. The entire world is under the grip of the spirit of fear and bondage. Sickesses and diseases are destroying multitudes around the world. Billions of people are suffering under the curse of poverty. Governments of nations are helpless. Crime and corruption are ravaging the nations of the earth. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the only hope for the world. People need the gospel like never before. The harvest is indeed plentiful, but the laborers are few. Who will rescue mankind from eternal destruction? God counts on you to reach the lost. Many churches are yet to reopen after the lockdown. With the way Christianity has been built around the four walls of a church, many have backslidden and the unsaved will never be evangelized. God's last hope is the believer. People may not come to church, but they will go to grocery stores. People will always go to clinics and hospitals. People will always go to school. Unbelievers may never attend church, so we need to take church to them where they live and work. This is why every believer should trust the Lord for divine ideas to reach out to the lost. Every believer needs to start a cell fellowship where he lives and works. That is how the end-time harvest will be reaped. 'Ordinary' people will take the gospel wherever they go, they will reach out to their neighbours and colleagues at work. Believers who own their own

business will reach out to their customers and clients. Teachers will reach out to their students. All hands must be on deck. Churches must develop strategies to run small group fellowships in people's homes, schools, and business centers.

## **QUALITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE CELL GROUP LEADER**

### **Availability**

God is not looking for perfect people to use; He is looking for available people who He will use to bring men and women into a personal relationship with Him. You must make yourself available whenever He needs someone to use. Let Him know He can trust you with His spiritual and material resources. Let Him know that you are willing to be used by Him any day, anytime, and anywhere.

### **Compassion**

You must see people the way God sees them – as sheep in need of a good shepherd (Matthew 9:36-39). See the unsaved as a person who desperately needs the salvation that only Jesus Christ gives. An unsaved person is dead in his trespasses and sins, helplessly under the control of the devil whose goal is to steal, kill and destroy (Ephesians 2:1-3; John 10:10). You must be burning with a desire to rescue him. See a new believer as a newly born baby who cannot do anything for himself and needs all the help he can get. See yourself as someone on a rescue mission.

**"And on some have compassion, making a distinction;  
but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,  
hating even the garment defiled by the flesh."**

Jude 1:22-23

You must understand who you are in Christ and the greatness of His power at work in your life. You must understand that you been given power and authority in the name of Jesus.

**"Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you." - Luke 10:19**

You must understand what you can do with the authority Jesus Christ has given you.

**"And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."**

Mark 16:15-18

You must be convinced that with Christ in you, you can do whatever He has called you to do.

**"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."**

Philippians 4:13.

You have all the abilities of Christ at your disposal.



## **Prayer**

You must have an active prayer life. You must be willing to labor in prayer until Christ is formed in the lives of the flock God has given you to care for.

**"My little children, for whom I labor in birth again until Christ is formed in you." - Galatians 4:19.**

You must understand what happens when you pray, God answers. Build your confidence in God who answers prayers. Pray for the veil over the eyes of the unsaved in your suburb to be removed so they can receive the gospel.

**"Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them."  
2 Corinthians 4:4).**

Pray for their hearts to be open to the word of God (Ephesians 1:15-22). Pray for your new converts that they may be established in the faith and in the local church. Destroy the hold of the devil on their lives and affairs. Pray for their needs to be met.

## **Commitment**

You must be willing to give your best and to give you all to your assignment as a cell leader. Never forget that what you are doing is very important to God. You are working with God to win many to Christ and stop them from going to hell if you disciple them well. You are preparing people to spend eternity with God in heaven. Jesus purchased the

people you are discipling in your cell group with His precious blood.

**“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” - Acts 20:28**

Be committed to this ministry to fulfil it.

**“...Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” - Colossians 4:17**

### **Submission**

If you are leading a cell group that belongs to a local church, never forget that you are a leader under the ‘chief under-shepherd’ – the Lead Pastor. Don’t do your own thing. Be willing to do as instructed. Resist every temptation of pride and rebellion. Avoid the company of people who criticise the Lead Pastors and rebuke them where you can. See yourself as an agent of God for the fulfilment of the vision of your local church.

### **Good example**

Don’t misrepresent Jesus Christ and the leadership of your church. Don’t discourage the flock committed to your trust. Be an example in your words and conduct.

**“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” - 1 Timothy 4:12**

Be an example of love. Let the people you lead learn what it really means to love God and neighbours by observing your lifestyle (1 Corinthians 13:1-8).

Be an example in the spirit. Maintain your zeal for the things of God and your spiritual fervency. Remain on fire for God.

**“Never lag in zeal and in earnest endeavor; be aglow and burning with the Spirit, serving the Lord.”**

Romans 12:11

Be an example of faith-let your members know you as a person living by faith. Be an example of purity-strive to be a character role model for your members.

## **HOW TO MULTIPLY THE NUMBER OF CELL GROUPS IN YOUR LOCAL CHURCH**

First, I want you to know that it is the will of God for the number of the cells in your church to multiply. This is because the cell group is one of the most effective ways of making disciples. Also, the cell group is the most effective way to organize evangelical outreach at the grassroots. In the community. The church grows as your cells multiply. In this chapter I will share with you how to multiply the number of cell groups in your church. If you have 100 members in your church, for example, you can have ten active home cells or more. I pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire you and give you wisdom on how to mobilize and

equip cell leaders in your church.

## VISION

First, you must have a vision for growth. And you should be able to communicate the vision to your congregation. You must let them know why it is important to have cell groups based on what you have learned from this book so far. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to inspire and motivate the people to come on board. Your vision should include the number of cells you want to have in a year for example.

## PRAYER

After you share the vision with the people, you should mobilize them to pray. For every vision to succeed, it must be powered by prayer. You need God's help to fulfill every vision and prayer is how to get God to come on board. In prayer, you should ask God to give you strategies that work. Also pray that God will help you identify potential cell leaders in your congregation. You should also pray that God will give you venues. That God will touch the hearts of the members of your congregation to open their homes to cell group fellowship meetings. You should pray with confidence knowing that more cell groups mean more souls, and more souls mean more disciples. And making disciples is the will of God. Remember what the Bible says about asking for anything that is the will of God:

**“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”**

1 John 5:14-15

So, when you're praying for the growth and multiplication of cells in your church, expect God to answer you. Expect Him to give you strategies, ideas, concepts, and innovations.

## **PREPARATION AND STRATEGIZING**

The first thing to do is identify the suburbs where you want to plant cells. You can start with areas where you already have members, or areas near where your members live or work. You can also target areas where you want to have new members even if you don't have church members living around there.

After you have identified the areas you want to plant cells, move to the mobilization stage. At every stage, you must pray. Remember that everything works through prayer in the Kingdom of God. You are about to recruit an army of shepherds. You need the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be able to identify the right people. This is because many of the people who volunteer may not look like the kind of people you are looking for. Just like the people Jesus Christ recruited. Peter had a big mouth, James and John had hot heads and Thomas was a doubter. Some of them were not learned people. Jesus spent time praying before he chose his disciples. You and I must also do the same if He did.

**“Now in those days it occurred that He went up into a mountain to pray, and spent the whole night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He summoned His disciples and selected from them twelve, whom He named**

**apostles (special messengers): They were Simon, whom He named Peter, and his brother Andrew; and James and John; and Philip and Bartholomew; And Matthew and Thomas; and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, And Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor (a treacherous, basely faithless person).” - Luke 6:12-16**

So, spend some time with your associates and leaders and pray that God will guide you as you select your cell leaders.

After you have prayed, make an announcement in church, sharing the vision God gave you concerning cell multiplication. Ask all your leaders and all who may be interested to be trained as cell leaders or make their homes or business places available as new cell locations to wait behind. Take down their names and schedule a time to meet with them.

Alternatively, you can invite your entire congregation to a special seminar where you will share the vision for church multiplication. In that meeting you teach extensively about what it means to be a cell leader. You also teach the importance of being a cell leader and making their home available as a new cell location. Take advantage of the opportunity to motivate the people. Remember you've already prayed that God would inspire them, and God has answered you. After a time of teaching, you go into a time of prayer and pray for the vision. Pray that the Lord will send his angels ahead of you to prepare the ground. Usually after prayer people's hearts are open and people get to hear from God and be part of the fulfillment of a vision.

After the seminar, you make a call for people who would like to cell leaders and people who want to make their houses available.

After people sign up, you take them through a series of specialized trainings. You can use this book to train them. Also encourage them to get a copy of this book as they will need it for reference purposes.

## **STRUCTURE**

You need to put structure in place, for training future cell leaders. If you implement the structure I'm about to recommend, you will never run out of cell leaders.

Every cell group should have a leader, an assistant, and a secretary. The cell leader should see the assistant cell leader and the secretary as potential cell leaders. He should work closely with them on running the cell group. He should take them along when he is going for visitations. He should involve them in the cell group administration. They should be involved in setting up the venue for the meetings. Sometimes the cell leader should allow them to run the weekly fellowships. Involved in planning outreaches, following up on new members and visitors.

Whenever the number of people in this cell group gets to 12 or 15, the cell leader should start planning to start a second cell. When you start another cell the assistant cell leader becomes the leader of the new cell, and the secretary becomes the new assistant cell leader. A new secretary should then be appointed. Also, the cell leader should always look out for members with the potential to run a cell. He should organize extra meetings with them where he coaches them on how to start and run a cell group. The

principle is that at every point there should be enough individuals who have been trained to take up leadership of a newly formed cell group.

## STRATEGIES FOR CELL GROWTH AND REPLICATION

I heard the story of how one cell started 15 new cells from Bishop David Oyedepo. They summarized the strategies the cell leader used. You can find it on their website [faithtabernacle.org.ng](http://faithtabernacle.org.ng).

Let me give you a quick summary because I believe principles are universal. They can work anywhere if they are applied.

First, the cell leader engaged the power of prayer. Everything in the Kingdom demands the force of prayer for effective delivery. They prayed to disarm all the forces that may resist the establishment of new cells in the target suburbs. They organize prayer walks, walking around the neighborhood where they intend to plant new cells and praying.

Then they organized evangelism outreaches. They went from house to house preaching the gospel to people. Even in areas where they didn't have members, they went to preach, trusting the Lord to find a convert who would make his home available for a new cell. They customized invitation handbills and flyers with the address of the house where the fellowship meetings will take place in locations where the fellowship already has a venue in place.

They engaged the 'Missionary Cell Minister' model



where they sent cell ministers to the areas they intended to plant a new cell. The aim was to develop disciples and potential cell leaders who they would hand over the cell to within the space of 1 month.

The cell leader also ensured that every meeting was very impactful. This required adequate preparation in prayer and in the word of God before every meeting. He made sure everyone in attendance participated during the Bible discussions.

The cell leader was very faithful to follow up on the new converts to make sure that they were doing well spiritually. He also gave special attention to members who were challenged. He visited them often. During the visits, he would also take the opportunity to pray for their neighbours. Like I mentioned earlier, prayer opens people's hearts to your ministry.

The data of all members of the cell was kept up to date. They had their names, addresses, and phone numbers, and kept in touch with them. The leaders were diligent to follow up on anyone who was absent immediately after every fellowship meeting.

Another strategy they used was to engage the youth in every community outreach. They must be given the opportunity to be active at various levels in the operation of the cell group fellowship as they represent the future of the ministry.

They celebrated birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions with their cell members. They also were involved with meeting practical needs of their members to the best of their abilities, escalating matters they could not handle to the church leadership for

intervention.

They held love feasts. Occasionally distributed snacks to children and asked them to invite their parents to the fellowship.

With these strategies one cell started 15 new cells. I believe this could work for your church.

# GET TO WORK

**I** believe you have learned a lot from this book. It is time to put what you have learned to work. Remember that starting and running a cell group is not a calling for a special group of believers. Every believer is supposed to run a small group fellowship at every stage of his Christian life. As your cell group members mature spiritually and start their own cell groups, you should find new people to disciple. Everywhere you go, you should leave a small group fellowship. Trust the Holy Spirit to enable you to raise up a leader who will take over the group when God moves you to another place. You are a missionary.



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# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



SAMUEL ODOH is called to equip believers for a life of victory through the teaching of the word of faith. His passion is to see people enjoy everything Jesus Christ paid for us to have with His precious blood.

He coordinates DominionLife Bible Studies in various towns and cities in South Africa. People from various nations of the world have been blessed by his teachings on the Samuel Odoh Podcast.

He is happily married to Ndiliseka and they serve God's people together.

## **Other Books Written by Samuel Odoh**

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