

## Do I Need a Sabbatical from CG Leading? (Discerning God's Invitation for Our Rest)

### ***Hope's Model for a Community Group Ministry Sabbatical***

In our Community Groups ministry, Hope desires to care well for its leaders by encouraging ministry that flows from your experience of God's grace rather than ministry coerced or worn-out by the church's needs. So, we invite you all to practice this sabbath rest weekly ("one day out of seven") and seasonally (once a year in the summer for Community Groups or every several years for ministry sabbaticals.)

God illustrates the importance of a seasonal sabbath (or ministry sabbatical) in passages such as Leviticus 25. There, God commands His people that, after six years of farming, they are to give the land a year of rest— a year to let the nutrients build back up in the soil so that it can remain fruitful and productive. So, we see here how a seasonal sabbath rest is especially important when doing ministry. Like land that is being farmed, ministry volunteers need a time away from the work of ministry, a time to rest from producing fruit for others to feed on, and to let gospel nutrients build back up in their own souls so that they can continue to be fruitful in the future. Therefore, extended sabbatical times are essential for anyone doing sustained ministry. You all need to rest and be refreshed in your own relationship with Jesus and in your personal non-CG-Leading-related relationships, to experience being followers and friends of Jesus first, and ministry leaders in his church second.

### ***How Do I Know When to Take a Ministry Sabbatical? (Discernment Questions)***

Based on Bible passages like Leviticus 25, we want to encourage a rest that is replenishing- allowing the nutrients to build back up into our heart's soil, so we can remain fruitful. Therefore, we recommend that you prayerfully consider taking a one year break from leading a Community Group every six years. This is a guideline *not* a rule, however. You may be spiritually exhausted- by your Community Group ministry experience or something else in your life earlier than 6 years (after three years, for instance). Or you may be feeling spiritually refreshed and renewed and ready to keep leading after 6 years as a Community Group Leader or take a break for shorter than a year. To discern how you are doing and when to take a ministry sabbatical, here are a few questions to consider asking God and others (you may want to consider spending time with these questions with a pen and journal):

- *What vision has God given me for putting to good use the variety of resources He has given me for His mission- especially in and through His church?*
- *Where am I thriving right now? (What's felt easy the past several weeks? Why?)*
- *Where am I struggling right now? (What's felt hard recently? This year? Why?)*
- *What are others saying to you about your need for rest? (E.g. What do your CG coaches and co-leaders, friends, spouse, or family think? Have you asked them?)*

### ***How Do You Know How to Take a Ministry Sabbatical? (More Discernment Questions)***

If you do decide to take a purposeful break from leading a Hope Community Group, the temptation will be to skip over rest. Without care, many of you will get busy: we feel the pressure (or relief) of finally being able to get to the important things that feel pushed off and unfinished, or the things we have wanted to add to our schedules. Others will feel the opposite: perhaps after some initial excitement, you will fill the extra time (and boredom) with distractions that are not actually restful. But what does it look like to be replenished, nourished at a heart soil level? Here are more questions to consider asking God and others (with a pen and journal maybe):

- *What needs to be replenished? (E.g. play, lightness, rest from \_\_, lingering, etc?)*
- *In what times and spaces have you just enjoyed being with God?*
- *What will I add? (What activities will I include? Do they give me rest or delight?)*
- *What will I let go of? (What activities will I exclude? How do they drain me?)*

**Next Step:** Reach out to your current CG Coach to process your answer to these questions.