

How to Get out of Summer SLUMP

by Eric Metcalf

With summer season quickly approaching, we have an opportunity as small group leaders to slump or not to slump. Usually the conversation goes like this: "So it sounds like everyone's going to be busy this summer. What if we take a break and catch back up again in the fall?" or "I think we should take a break this summer, I know I could use it."

I understand the temptation to do this because I love summers and it seems reasonable to take a break and enjoy it. However, my encouragement to us as leaders is to keep plotting the spiritual course ahead. Consider these words in Hebrews:

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

I guess schedules and life were a challenge for the early church too. Here are a few suggestions on how to embrace your group while still taking advantage of summer weather:

- Remain faithfully committed to your group
- Meet weekly/consistently regardless if some members are missing
- Rotate hosting and plan more fun nights
- Take a weekend retreat
- Plan a monthly BBQ or dinner together
- Participate in a service project together – contact your director for ideas on where to serve.

Take on the summer challenge and don't allow the summer slump to get to you and your small group.

Encouragement Tip: Don't do it Alone

by Tracey Smith

During our summer break, my wife Hollye snapped a picture of our two children walking “hand in hand.” I have to say it is probably one of my favorite pictures. It reminded me that we are created for each other. I try to encourage our kids that God has given them to each other to do life together. As I put this into a Small Group Leadership perspective, I am reminded that leadership is not to be done alone! So many leaders think that they can do it alone and they really (without knowing it) set themselves up for failure or burnout! Here are some ideas that can help protect you from burnout and enhance the joys of shared leadership:

- 1) Identify an apprentice.** Find someone in the group that you can identify as a potential leader.

- 2) Recruit a communicator.** This is a person who loves to communicate. They can write the weekly emails, call those that missed the meeting, send out reminders, or just make sure everyone is in the communication loop.

- 3) Have a CARE coordinator.** Care is an extremely important part of your Small Group. A Care Coordinator would make sure care is provided during times of sickness, hospitalization, moving, death, family tragedy or anything where the group needs to be the hands of Christ to another individual in their group.

- 4) Enlist a Food coordinator.** Do you have someone who says this week let's do Mexican food or next week appetizers. This person loves to be hospitable. Allow them to use their creativity to create exciting theme nights. This allows for fun and creativity and allows another person to put their God-given gift to use.

- 5) You come up with one!** Think outside of the box. Allow your group to help and to feel involved and needed. Many times people become disconnected from their small group because they do not have a sense of ownership. They sense that they are not important or valued. God has given us special talents and gifts that a leader can use within the small group environment and actually help the group grow in their relationship with God and with each other!
What are some ways that you are allowing people to share the leadership as you share the leadership journey with others?