Ending Well



Well done for making the decision to end your group well. The number of methods available to end your group are vast and can be confusing. This resource is designed to take the guesswork out of the who, what, when, where, and how of ending well.

This two-week study is designed to help you end your group well. Ending well for your group might seem simple, confusing, complicated, or altogether unappealing. However, how your group ends impacts how your group members will look back on the entire group experience. Ending well is important. That's why we've put together this practical resource to help you navigate the final weeks of your group.

This Ending Well resource includes video content that will help your group understand why ending is so important to the life and health of a group, as well as leader resources that help you initiate and facilitate conversations about ending. It also provides you some practical tools for working with your group members to create a plan for ending well.

Thank you for the time and energy you've invested in leading a group. And thanks for choosing to do what it takes to make sure your group ends well.

About This Leader's Guide

This guide is designed for you. It provides you with the resources you need to lead a helpful conversation with your group members. It's not a Participant's Guide. Your group members don't need to see it, review it, or do any homework.

We recommend you do Session One (6) to (8) weeks prior to the end of your group.

The Call to Biblical Community

At Rush Creek Church, we are convinced that the abundant life of a Christ-follower can only be found within the context of Biblical Community.

We see this truth demonstrated throughout Scripture in countless examples as God establishes different forms of Biblical Community at every stage of His church.

From the Israelites in the Old Testament being established as God's chosen people, to Jesus calling a diverse group of people to come and follow Him together, and then the New Testament church being sent out to make disciples of all the earth!

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" Matthew 28:19 God's plan for His church has always been to provide a place for walking alongside others in every phase of life as we follow Him together.

That is why we have created different forms of Biblical Community in three unique contexts:

Small Groups	A group of people committed to following Christ in Biblical Community.
D-Groups	Gender specific groups consisting of 4 or less people, focused on raising up and sending out Forerunners.
Care Groups	Care groups focus on helping people find freedom.

Understanding Seasons in Small Groups

Since you have been part of this small group, you have likely experienced various seasons of life. What a gift to have a place to belong, be known, and be loved through every high and low!

Just like we go through different seasons in our own personal lives, every small group experiences seasons as well. Sometimes, these seasons can lead to a transition for some or all of the group's members.

As you navigate this transition together as a group, know that you will be supported every step of the way. Our leadership has carefully provided a path that will ensure each member has clarity, purpose, and peace about a plan moving forward.

Over the next few weeks while you finish your remaining studies together, your group will go through 2 main sessions with videos outlining a healthy understanding of small group transitions. Here are a few helpful practices to consider during this time:

- Pray: ask God to provide direction, comfort, peace, and unity during the transition.
- Share: be honest with your thoughts and feelings about the transition in humility.
- Remember: take time to celebrate what God has done during your time together.
- Commit: your small group may change or end, but Biblical Community does not.

"And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching." Hebrews 10:24-25

Quick Tips on How to End Well:



Planning to End: Invite your coach and groups pastor to help make a plan. Communicate with your coach to develop a nextstep strategy for your group and yourself. We will make a timeline for telling your group, how to communicate, deciding when to end, choosing a future group leader, and launching your next group experience.



Use our Ending Well Resource guide to plan your last weeks together as a group. Having these videos, guided discussions, activities, and prayer time will help make sure everything is covered. You can also check out our Ending Well for leaders videos explaining these tips on how to navigate the process.



Watch Video 1



Watch Video 2



Telling the Group: Intentional communication in person is the key to success. Choosing to tell your group in-person eliminates confusion and gives group members the best experience. There should be time for you to explain the decision-making process, celebrate all God has done in your time together, and open the floor for members to share testimonies and ask questions. Inviting your coach or groups pastor to join you will reassure the group members and help them follow through with next steps.



Taking Next Steps: Biblical Community never ends, even when Biblical Community groups do. At the end of your group, cast vision for group members to hold fast the value of community. Whether the group is disbanding or continuing without you, explain clear steps for the future of the groups or individual members. Work with your groups pastor to find your own new Biblical Community if you are not staying with the group.

SESSION ONE: Name Reality

Introduction

SAY THIS:

"Before we start our next study, we're going to spend this session discussing how our group will end. I know it feels like we've got some time before our group ends but we need to start considering the end. It'll be here sooner than we think. So, this session, we're going to watch a video that explains why ending the group is important and then talk a little bit about what it looks like to end well.

First, let's kick things off with an icebreaker."

DO THIS ACTIVITY: 5-10 minutes

Follow these steps to lead your group through a picture exercise. This exercise will help you gauge what your group members are thinking and feeling about ending the group. That knowledge can help shape the conversations you have with them in the weeks to come.

1. Have your group members use their smart phone to find a picture that represents how they feel about the group ending.

2. Go around the room and have everyone share why they picked the picture they did.

Leader Tip: During this activity focus on affirming each person's response. This is not the time for defensiveness or debate. You want your group members to feel heard. Unless the group members is knowingly sharing false information or intentionally creating a problem there is no need for correction at this time.

SAY THIS:

"Thanks for sharing your thoughts. That gives me a better sense of what I need to do to lead us towards a good ending for the group. Now, let's watch this video together, and then we'll talk about it." Notes:

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SESSION ONE

VIDEO: 5 minutes



The church is a **<u>continually growing</u>** community of believers that serves as the primary context for discipleship and spiritual growth.

Our ability to experience faith as God intends is not solely, or even primarily, an isolated personal endeavor.

At strategic times, Paul would set out to start a new faith community with <u>new people</u> so that the good news of the gospel would continue to <u>expand</u> outward.

<u>Cherish</u> the relationships you do have and <u>trust</u> God for those that are still to come.

DISCUSSION: 30 minutes

Use these questions to discuss the video.

- Share your initial response to the coming transition.
- What questions or concerns do you have?

Leader Tip: As group members share initial reactions, encourage vulnerability. You can do this by validating their thoughts while giving reassurance that God will carry them forward.

- How does Jeremiah's example of Paul comfort, excite, or challenge you?
- What has God done in your life through your time in this small group?
- Ask for prayer requests and point out the prayer prompt below.

PRAYER: 10 minutes

Spend time praying as a group. You can gather prayer requests from each member, but also:

• Thank God for your time together as a group and the way He's grown each of you.

• Pray that the group is able to end well.

• Pray that you have helpful conversations in the weeks to come and that everyone begins to feel peace about ending.

Notes:

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SESSION ONE

Wrap-Up

SAY THIS:

"Thanks for having this conversation. It's just the first step as we move toward the conclusion of our group. We'll start a new study at our next group meeting. But I'll be reaching out in the weeks to come to have some additional conversations. I'd just ask that between now and the end of the group, you pray for three things:

1. Wisdom for yourself as you take the best next step in group life

2. Wisdom for me as I try to lead us towards ending well

3. The people out there who need to be in Biblical Community and who will end up being in a group with some of us. At this point, we don't know who those people are, but God does."

BETWEEN SESSIONS:

Ending Well Tactics

Before you get to Session Two, take a look at the table on the next page to see the different options your group may have for transitioning. Schedule a time to sit down with your coach to discern the best option for your group.

At the end of this document, you will find an "Ending Well Planning Card." Please take the time to fill out this card and submit it to your coach when your group is ready to end.

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Notes:

ENDING WELL TACTIC OPTIONS

Tactic

Original Group

Leader Launches New Group

Future Leader Launches New Group Future leader becomes leader, finds new future leaders, same members

Leader stays, finds new future leader, same members

Core Groups Launches New Group

"Turbo" - All Members Launch New Groups Leader stays, finds new future leader, some members stay, some new members added

All members are future leaders who start a new group individually or in pairs, leader starts new group



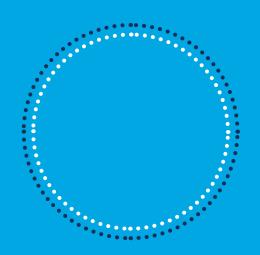
New Group

Original leader leaves, finds new future leaders, finds new members

Future leader leaves, becomes new leader, finds new future leaders, new members

Future leader leaves, becomes new leader, finds new apprentice, some members follow, finds additional new members

Future leader becomes new leader, finds new future leader, finds new members



SESSION TWO: Celebrate Change

Introduction

SAY THIS:

"This is our final meeting we'll have as a group. We're going to finish the Ending Well resource by reflecting on our journey as a group together and then celebrate what God has done in and through our group. Our purpose as a group was to strengthen our faith, learn to apprentice after Jesus, and to experience a restoration in our hearts as we follow Jesus together. I hope you believe and feel we have challenged one another in ways that accomplished our purpose. I hope you feel we've changed.....and we're going to celebrate change."

Leader Tip: By now, you've had offline conversations with your group members. You've talked with your coach and created a plan for ending well. Now is a good time to go over that plan to make sure everyone in the group understands and agrees to next steps.

SAY THIS:

"Right now, we're going to watch a video about celebrating change, and then we'll talk about it."

VIDEO: 5 minutes



In Biblical Community, your stories start **intersecting** and come together to tell an even bigger story.

The Israelites were instructed to set up a monument to help the nation remember <u>God's faithfulness</u> in the past, giving them confidence in the <u>present</u> that he would care for them in the <u>future</u>.

As you follow God into the unknown, these memories will enable you to <u>trust him</u> as you step into a <u>new season</u> of Biblical Community here at Rush Creek.

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Notes:

SESSION TWO

DISCUSSION: 30 minutes

Use these questions to discuss the video.

- Give an example of how God has uniquely allowed your story to intersect with someone else's in our small group.
- Why has this small group been special to you?
- What is one of your favorite memories from our time together? (Meaningful, funny, etc.)

Leader Tip: Before continuing to the final couple of questions, take a few minutes to point out the growth you've seen in each member or couple in the group. Be specific. Be positive.

• What growth have you seen in the life of one of the other group members? How did that growth challenge and inspire you in your own spiritual journey?

• Consider the story Jeremiah shared of God calling Joshua to lead after Moses. How have you seen God's faithfulness in guiding this small group?

• How will you set up "stones of remembrance" to give you hope in this next season?

PRAYER: 10 minutes

Spend time praying as a group. You can gather prayer requests from each member, but also:

• Thank God for your time together as a group and the way he's grown each of you.

• Pray that the group ends well and that you're able to make space for others to enter into Biblical Community.

• Pray that God brings the people he wants you to connect with into each of your lives.

Wrap-Up

SAY THIS:

"Well, this is it. Thank you for the investment you made into this group. It's been a privilege to lead this group during this season. I've enjoyed watching each of you grow in your relationship with Jesus, and that encouraged me to grow I my relationship with him."

Leader Tip: At this point, communicate clear next steps. How and when will the group multiply? Who is responsible for taking what actions? Make sure this session ends with clarity about what happens next.

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Continuing in Biblical Community

Even though your small group is transitioning to a new season, the call to Biblical Community remains the same.

As you step into this new season, we pray you will be bold to continue walking in obedience to the calling on your life for discipleship.

We understand that it is counter-cultural to step away from an individualistic mindset, sacrificing convenience and comfort for the sake of community.

But our call is clear, the reward is great, and God is faithful! Rest assured that the Lord will bring to completion the work He has started in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

We are grateful God has called you to be part of our church family. It is a privilege to partner with you in our vision to be **Forerunners** of the **faith**, **united** to help people **find** and **follow** Jesus.

"I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Indeed, it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, and you are all partners with me in grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how deeply I miss all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And I pray this: that your love will keep on growing in knowledge and every kind of discernment, so that you may approve the things that are superior and may be pure and blameless in the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God." Philippians 1:3-11

Ending Well Planning Card

Coach:	Leader:			
Ending Well Tactic:				
Leader Launch Future Leader Launch	Core Launch	Turbo		
Who is involved:				
Leader:				
Future Leader(s):				
When Will You Inform The Group:				
Last Day of Group:				
I Will Follow Up With My Coach:				
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Coach:	Leader:			
Ending Well Tactic:				
Leader Launch Future Leader Launch	Core Launch	Turbo		
Who is involved:				
Leader:				
Future Leader(s):				
When Will You Inform The Group:				
Last Day of Group:				
I Will Follow Up With My Coach:				