

# Community:

## *Ending Well* In Your Small Group

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Making space for people who need to move from rows to circles.

Featuring Teesha Hadra and Clay Scroggins

## WELCOME

Whether this was your first small group or you've done this before, we hope your time together has been characterized by growth and change.

This two-week study is designed to help you end your group well. That may seem simple. In a lot of ways it is simple. But it's also important. As you'll see, how your group ends has a huge influence on how your group members will look back on the entire group experience. That's why we've put together this simple, practical resource to help you navigate the final weeks of your group.

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

This study is different from a typical group resource in two ways:

1. It's a two-session study, **but those two sessions aren't designed to happen back-to-back.** Ideally, you'll lead your group through Session One before you begin your final study together. Once you finish that final study, you'll come back and wrap things up with Session Two.
2. While the two sessions of Ending Well provide you with the opportunity to have some important conversations with your group members, the real substance of this study is in the supplemental leader resources. Ending well requires more than a couple group meetings. Between the sessions, you'll have an opportunity to have deeper (often one-on-one) conversations with your group members that will help you to create a practical plan for ending. The leader resources will guide you through that process.

Thank you for the time and energy you've invested in leading a group. And thank you 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 before your group meeting.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE:

- **Introduction and Wrap-Up:** These sections provide you with sample content for setting up and concluding the discussion. You don't have to read them verbatim, but it's a good idea to communicate to your group the content they contain.
- **Video:** Teaching content is provided by video. The video includes a host segment that sets up the session's discussion and provides context for why this conversation is important. The host segment is followed by a teaching segment by Andy Stanley.
- **Discussion Questions:** These questions are provided as a roadmap for your conversation. Because your group members won't have a copy of them, you can modify them or even add your own follow-up questions based on the natural flow of the conversation.
- **Takeaway Card:** This is a printable or emailable PDF to help remind your group members how to take action on what you discuss, and to encourage them to do just that.
- **Additional Leader Resources:** These are optional resources that may help you answer questions your group members have, guide other them as they take next steps, or just create a richer and more helpful group discussion.

## SESSION ONE: TALK ABOUT “IT”

### INTRODUCTION

*Communicate this to your group:*

Before we start our next study, we’re going to spend this meeting talking about how this group will end. I know it feels like we’ve got some time before we need to start thinking about the end, but 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.

### VIDEO

[Watch the video together with your group.]

### DISCUSSION

1. Use these questions to discuss the video:
2. During the video, Teesha said, “How your group ends matters. It will shape how you view the entire group experience.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
3. During the video, Clay said, “The best and healthiest groups are also concerned with helping people outside of the group to connect and grow with Jesus.” In what ways do you think others could benefit from your experiences as a group?
4. Is it difficult for you to believe that multiplying this group is beneficial to you? Why

### PREPARING TO MULTIPLY: GROUP APPRENTICE

“An important part of us ending our group well is multiplying our group and the first step towards multiplying is for us to choose at least one couple (married groups) or individual (adult groups) to be our Group Apprentice. As mentioned in the video we can have more than one Apprentice, but we do need at least one. A Group Apprentice is someone that is willing to learn about being a future group leader.”

As the apprentice, you will spend the remainder of our time together as a group:

1. Learning about what it means to be a group leader at Athens Church
2. You will meet with one of the Groups staff members to get know each other and be encouraged to grow in your relationship with Jesus.
3. You will be invited to all of the events that are put on for Group Leaders.
4. You will be given your own “Apprentice Guide” that will help you learn about leading a group at your own pace.

“The hope is that you become a group leader in the future but you are NOT committing to being a group leader at this time. You are simply saying you want to grow in your relationship with Jesus and learn more about what it means to be a group leader. Remember, Jesus was a group leader and if we are growing in our relationship with Jesus and becoming more like Him, one day, we should all serve as a group leader of some kind.”

So, let’s talk about apprenticing and how it will help our group end well.

Questions:

1. Share about a time in your life when you were “apprenticing”, meaning you were learning how to do something from someone else with the goal of being able to do it yourself one day. What were you doing? What was the experience like? How long did it last? What was it like when you did that task alone for the first time?
2. What are some reasons why you would NOT want to be a Group Apprentice?
3. What are some ways that you think having a Group Apprentice would benefit us now and help us end well?

“However you feel about our group ending, eventually it will end and I’m sure we all want to end well. I will be talking with some of you about being a group apprentice because it’s a great time to start as an apprentice and there are some events coming soon for leaders and apprentices that I would love for you to attend.”

***(\*IMPORTANT NOTE: Leaders, be sure to follow up soon, maybe right after this meeting and ask at least 2 couples or individuals to be your Group’s Apprentice. As soon as you have an Apprentice, share their names with your Groups Director)***

## **WRAP-UP**

*Communicate this to your group:*

Thanks for having this conversation. It’s just a first step as we move toward the conclusion of this 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. For wisdom for yourself as you take your best next step in group life.
2. Wisdom for me as I try to lead us toward ending well.
3. The people out there who need to be in community, and who end up being in a group with some of us. At this point, we don’t know who those people are, but God does.

## SESSION TWO: CELEBRATE CHANGE

### INTRODUCTION

*Communicate this to your group:*

This is the final curriculum-based meeting we'll have as a group. We're going to finish up the Ending Well study by looking back at what we've experienced together, and celebrating. The purpose of our group time was for us to connect relationally and, through those connections, grow spiritually. I hope, as we wrap things up, our time together has changed each of us for the better. That's why we're going to celebrate change.

***[NOTE: By now, you've had off-line conversations with your group members. You've 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.]***

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

### VIDEO

[Watch the video together with your group.]

### DISCUSSION

Use these questions to discuss the video:

1. What is one of your favorite memories from this group experience?
2. If you could go back and do one thing differently during our time together as a group, what would it be? Why?
3. In what ways have you grown and changed as a result of group?
4. How did the members of this group challenge you to grow?

***[NOTE: Before continuing to the final question, take a few minutes to point out the growth you've seen in each member or couple in the group. Be specific. Be positive.]***

5. 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?

## PRAYER

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

## WRAP-UP

*Communicate this to your group:*

That's it. I want to thank each of you for how you've invested your time and energy in this group. It's been a privilege to you during this season. It's been great watching you grow in your relationship with Jesus, and that's helped me to grow in my relationship with him.

*[NOTE: 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 a clarity about what happens next.]*