



## Group Leader Guide Instructions

### Sample Small Group Agenda

Group Meets: 6:00–8:00 pm

**6:00–6:45 pm**

#### Welcome & Relationship

This time is purely relational. Maybe you enjoy snacks or a meal together. Feel free to play the Connection game from the discussion guide. This time also allows people who are running late to join the group without missing discussion time.

**6:45–7:00 pm**

#### Worship & Prayer

Here you can sing a few songs, worship together, or ask for praise reports! Use this time as a transition for people to open their hearts before the discussion time.

**7:00–7:45 pm**

#### Discussion Guide

This is where the group gathers to go through the discussion guide as you facilitate. Remember, you don't have to read every point or go through every question. Let the Holy Spirit lead and move through the discussion guide.

**7:45–8:00 pm**

#### Prayer & Relationship

Close the group with prayer and/or more time of relationship.



## The Principle of First Robert Morris

### OVERVIEW

The principle of first is about making sure God is first in our lives. In Exodus, God told Moses to consecrate the firstborn among the children and the beasts. Throughout Scripture, the firstborn always belonged to the Lord. Our obedience to God's principles reveals the condition of our hearts.

### CONNECTION

Ten Things In Common: Divide your group members into groups of four or five by having them count off. (You do this because people usually sit with the people they already know.) Have your newly formed groups find ten things they all have in common and write them down. Body parts like legs and arms don't count, nor do clothing items (we all wear shoes and pants!). This will help the group explore shared interests. After eight to ten minutes, have one person from each group volunteer to read the list out loud. Get ready for some laughs as you discover new things about each other!

### QUICK RECAP

Key Scripture: Exodus 13:1–13

- ***The firstborn must be sacrificed or redeemed.***

In Exodus, the firstborn among beasts that were clean had to be sacrificed, while the firstborn of the unclean had to be redeemed. These two classifications are examples of what was to come. God's firstborn Son, Jesus, was clean and had to be sacrificed. We are unclean, and therefore Jesus was sacrificed for our redemption. God gave Jesus first, in faith, even when we were sinners. Jesus is God's tithe.

- ***The firstfruits must be offered.***

Proverbs 3:9–10 says that we are to honor the Lord with our possessions and with the firstfruits of all our increase. When we do this, we invite God's blessing into our lives, and "your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow." In Genesis 4, God honored Abel's offering but not Cain's. The reason is because Abel's offering was from the firstborn of his flock; however, Cain's offering was not from his firstfruits.

- ***The tithe must be first.***

There are many blessings that go along with tithing, but it is the principle of faith and putting God first that initiates these blessings. The first portion, the tithe, is the portion that redeems the rest. God does not desire a legalistic begrudging response; He desires our hearts to be submitted to Him in joy and faith that His principles are true.

### **GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Take a minute to reflect on a time that you gave of your time, talents, tithe, or offering. It could be big or little. How did you feel about yourself when you gave? If you are comfortable, share with the group.
2. This week Pastor Robert talked about the principle of first, which is giving to God before we see if we are going to have enough. How did you feel as he explained this principle? Do you think giving your firstfruits is hard or easy? Explain.
3. What does the principle of first mean to you, and do you agree or disagree that it is important? Explain.
4. What are some things in our lives that might conflict with the principle of first? Explain.
5. What types of fears or concerns, if any, do you wrestle with most when thinking about the principle of first? Why is it sometimes easier to believe that we are saved by faith than it is to believe by faith that God will bless us and care for our needs?
6. Read Proverbs 3:9. How can we give our time and talents to God using the principle of first?

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION**

This week, take time to really think about and honestly reflect upon these three areas of your life as they relate to the principle of first: treasure, time, and talent. As you think seriously about these things, journal your responses to these questions:

- ***Treasure***

How does the principle of first apply to your finances? If you have started tithing by faith, how does this principle affect when and how you tithe? In what way does this stretch your faith?

- ***Time***

How does the principle of first apply to your time? In addition to the firstfruits of your day, what are some other blocks of time where you could give your first to God?

- ***Talent***

If you were to give the firstfruits of your talents, how would that look? In what ways can you honor God at the beginning of everything you do? How can you remind yourself to do this on a regular basis?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank You for teaching us Your ways and the principle of first. Give us greater revelation and understanding regarding Your heart and the purpose for tithing. Please help us to have faith to give You the first of all our increase. Help us to fully submit our hearts to You in all our ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## **Tip Of The Week**

### **What If We Don't Connect?**

From time to time, people will visit your small group with whom you just don't seem to have a connection. No need to panic! Here are some helpful suggestions to walk through this scenario.

#### Bring Them With You

You may not connect with them, but someone else might. Let them walk around with you as you converse with others. They may find someone else to connect with!

#### Designate a People Connector

If there's someone in your group who's gifted at getting along with everyone, designate that person as a Purposeful People Connector. PPCs are great at intentionally connecting people with others and not leaving anyone feeling isolated!

## **The Connect Stage**

When people in your small group begin to connect with one another, a new dynamic of relational care is established. You'll notice people are on a first-name basis and even ask about each other's family or work life. At this stage, leaders and members are having these thoughts:

#### Leader's Thoughts

- Clarify expectations.
- Empower member's gifts.
- Celebrate group progress!

#### Member's Thoughts

- Am I opening up?
- Am I growing?
- Is this authentic community?