



# ECC Church in a Box

## Facilitating Skills

Notice who has the following gifts. They may be the ones you want facilitating this group.

### Servant

- These persons wants the group to succeed first, as opposed to wanting themselves to succeed first.

### Listening

- They pay close attention to what others are saying and understand well what is being said. They get it. The person *who is being listened to feels understood*. That's the test, not whether the listener *thinks* he/she understands.
- A good listener stays with the speaker long enough to truly explore what the speaker's interest is before introducing their own ideas or interests. You can see that their primary effort is to understand not to get their own ideas out there.
- A good listener does not judge what another is saying but endeavors to understand. They may disagree after understanding but not in a judgmental way. More on this below. Remember you are not agreeing just because you understand what someone is saying. Remember the goal is to understand to *their* satisfaction.
- A good listener picks up on emotions and body language not just words. "You say you're fine with the decision, but your face and body seem to be saying something different. I'm wondering how you really feel?" Also a good listener acknowledges feelings by saying things like, "That seems to bring up some sadness for you."
- Notice: when a group knows they will not be judged by what they say, they are more likely to be open. They trust. Community is being built in this way. It cannot be built on fear. Notice that when feelings are allowed, people feel they can be themselves. These are the beginning of a loving community. A church at its best is always a loving community; and when it does not love, at its best it moves toward reconciliation in a natural way because it understands the importance of its communal life. Communities that get stuck here can become toxic.

### Leading

- In a one on one situation a good listener understands and can still disagree in a nonjudgmental way: "I understand you didn't like that film because it seemed shallow to you. That was not my experience." However if they are facilitating a group, they may want to put their ideas pretty much on hold since the goal is to have the group function as a group. In that case the good listener will, after making sure he/she understand why someone disliked a film, say something like, "OK, you think the film was shallow; let's get some other opinions out there." Notice this demonstrates subtly to the group that there is always more than one perspective.
- Similarly when a person gets really worked up or agitated, a good leader will acknowledge what is going on, maybe plumb it a little bit, and find a way to include others before it becomes "all about" one person. "It's clear that John really doesn't like that idea. Other perspectives?"
- A leader will "protect" those who hold back more from those who always put themselves out there. "Let's hear from someone who hasn't had a chance to speak yet." All of these leadership skills indicate to the group that everyone will be respected.