

SACRED SPACES

Training Plan

Total Time: 2 hours

Checklist of supplies and to-dos:

- Training placed on church calendar (make sure there are no conflicting meetings)
- Copies of *Sacred Spaces* ordered for each participant
- Snacks and drinks purchased
- Name tags and markers secured
- Pens secured for each participant
- Meeting place reserved
- Promotional items developed (brochures, flyers, PDFs, etc)
- Group leaders invited to the training (multiple times – email, text, worship bulletin, church newsletter, etc.)
- A/V equipment requested / room setup requested

Before participants arrive on the day of training:

- Place a copy of *Sacred Spaces* at each seat.
- Place several large markers on each table (for writing names on name tags)
- Place a pen and a name tag at each person's seat
- Connect your laptop and check all A/V and sound connections
- Set the room temperature to a comfortable level
- Set out snacks and drinks on a table
- Play background music as people arrive

PART 1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION (10 MINUTES)

- **Objective:** Set the tone, introduce the "sacred spaces" concept, and encourage engagement.
- **Activities:**
 - Brief welcome and prayer.
 - Icebreaker: In groups of 2 to 3 people, guide participants to respond to this statement: "When my life gets too busy, I move _____ to the back burner."
 - After most have arrived, invite several participants to share their responses with the entire group.

- **Reference:** Call attention to the Introduction & Purpose for *Sacred Spaces* (pp. 4–8). Highlight the chapter headings to orient participants to the content of the booklet.

PART 2. SACRED SPACE #1: THE MOST IMPORTANT RELATIONSHIP – TIME WITH GOD (30 MINUTES)

- **Objective:** Emphasize the importance of daily time with God.
- **Activities:**
 - **Mini-Teaching:** Summarize key insights from Chapter 1 (pp. 9–22).
 - Highlight Jesus' example (pp. 11–12)
 - Mark 1:35
 - Luke 5:16
 - Call attention to other Bible characters who were known for praying (p. 13)
 - Moses – Exodus 34:28
 - Elijah – I Kings 19:11-13
 - Daniel 6:10
 - Point to the other examples of people from church history who were known for praying (pp. 13-14):
 - John Wesley
 - Martin Luther
 - Billy Graham
 - Call attention to the seven tips listed under the heading Practical Tips for Making Time for God (pp. 15–16).
 - **Table Discussion:**
 - Ask: What is your favorite devotional practice or tool?
 - **Reflection:** Call attention to Reflective Question #3 (p. 23) for additional **Table Discussion.** (*"Jesus often withdrew to pray despite His demanding ministry. What lessons can you draw from His example for your own spiritual discipline?"*)
 - **Optional:** The church may consider gifting each participant with a journal or a devotional guide to help enhance their one-on-one time with God each day at the end of this part of the training.

PART 3. SACRED SPACE #2: THE SACRED SPACE OF RELATIONSHIPS (30 MINUTES)

- **Objective:** Explore the power of relationships and community beyond the regular meeting time of the group.
- **Activities:**
 - **Mini-Teaching:**

- Explain that a second sacred space is relationships.
- Invite participants to read the paragraph (see below) on page 26 about spending time with group members between Sundays, and invite them to respond with thoughts and/or examples from their current Bible study group and past experiences.
 - *“When leaders understand the power of community, they help their group become a place of transformation, not just information. But community isn’t just cultivated during the group’s Bible study time. In fact, a lot of community-building takes place in that sacred space outside of the group time. Being a Bible study leader is more than just delivering a good study. It’s more than donuts and fellowship on a Sunday morning. Some of the best group life happens between Sundays.”*
- Highlight Jesus’s relational model (pp. 27–29), especially the pull quote on page 29 (*“Building relationships and creating a strong community of faith is more than a nice idea – it’s central to what it means to follow Jesus”*).
 - Ask, “How would you rate your group in building strong relationships among the active group members? With guests? With absentees?”
- Direct the group to scan “More than a Lesson—You’re Shepherding Sheep” (pp. 31–33). Invite volunteers to share one insight they gained while scanning this section.
- **Brainstorm:** Place the participants into groups of 2 to 3. Direct each grouping to list several ways that group leaders might spend time with group members between the days on which the group meets (note: this would take place over a year), or would help the group members spend time with one another between meetings.
- **Summarize:** Call attention to the section on page 34, “They’re Not a Project – They’re Your People.” Reinforce key ideas from that portion of the chapter before moving on to Part 4.

PART 4. SACRED SPACE #3: THE SACRED SPACE OF WELLNESS – MAKING TIME FOR ME (30 MINUTES)

- **Objective:** Encourage leaders to prioritize their own well-being for sustainable ministry.
- **Activities:**
 - **Mini-Teaching:**
 - Explain that a third sacred space involves ourselves.

- Present key points from Chapter 3 (pp. 45–59).
 - Call attention to the “flight” illustration on page 46 as a way to begin this part of the training, emphasizing the importance of taking care of yourself first, before you try taking care of others.
 - Summarize the “Plimsoll Line” analogy (pp. 56–57).
- **Self-Assessment:** “Where is your Plimsoll Line?” – Place participants into groups of 2 to 3 people. Direct participants to reflect on their current load and share with their group one area where they need to say “no” or delegate (pp. 56–57).
- **Group Brainstorm:** Lead the group to list self-care practices and hobbies (pp. 48–51) that help leaders recharge. Encourage volunteers to share other actions leaders may take to recharge. Write these on a marker board as suggestions are given.
- **Reflection:** Use the section on pp.57 and following (Finding Buoyancy Again) to focus attention on four ways to deal with an overcrowded schedule.

STEP 5. LIVING OUT SACRED SPACES: ACTION PLANNING & COMMITMENT (15 MINUTES)

- **Objective:** Help leaders set concrete next steps for integrating sacred spaces into their lives and ministries.
- **Activities:**
 - **Personal Action Plan:** Invite each participant to write in their copy of *Sacred Spaces* one commitment for each sacred space (God, Others, Self).
 - **Peer Accountability:** Lead the group to pair up and share commitments. Challenge them to plan to check in with each other after 30 days.
 - **Closing Prayer:** Dedicate these commitments to God.

Step 6. Q&A AND WRAP-UP (5 minutes)

- **Objective:** Address final questions and encourage ongoing growth.
 - Open the floor for questions, resource sharing, and encouragement.
 - Encourage participants to read their copy of *Sacred Spaces* to discover much more content that was not covered in the training.