



Leading a Living & Learning Group Arwain Grŵp Dysgu i Dyfu



Croeso i Byw a Dysgu, cyfres o adnoddau'r Eglwys yng Nghymru ar gyfer disgyblaeth a hyfforddiant gweinidogaeth leol. Gobeithio y byddant o gymorth i ysgogi a rhannu gwybodaeth ac y byddant yn ennyn diddordeb a brwdfrydedd.

Un o brif nodweddion Byw a Dysgu yw ei fod yn digwydd mewn grwpiau bach, trwy gyfrwng trafodaethau sy'n cael eu harwain yn bennaf. Nid adnodd ar gyfer darlithfa mohono, nac ar gyfer astudiaeth annibynnol. Yn hytrach, mae wedi'i anelu at y math o ddysgu treiddgar a gweddnewidiol a gynhelir mewn cymuned o berthnasau.

Mae hynny'n cymryd dau beth yn ganiataol. Yn gyntaf, mae'n cymryd bod cymuned o'r fath eisoes yn bodoli. Bydd y rhan fwyaf o adnoddau Byw a Dysgu'n cael eu defnyddio gan grwpiau sydd eisoes yn bodoli mewn rhyw ffurf, boed mewn Ardal Weinidogaeth, Plwyf, grŵp mewn cartref, neu leoliad arall. Mewn ambell achos, gellir cychwyn neu ailgychwyn grŵp er mwyn gweithio'ch ffordd drwy un neu fwy o'r modiwlau yn y casgliad hwn. Naill ffordd neu'r llall, mae Byw a Dysgu wedi'i gynllunio i ddiwallu anghenion grwpiau cyfredol neu rai newydd.

Yr ail ragdybiaeth yw y bydd gan bob grŵp arweinydd o ryw fath. Nid yw'r set hon o adnoddau yn cymryd bod gan yr arweinydd unrhyw arbenigedd academiaidd penodol na chymwysterau arbennig. Efallai y bydd hynny'n wir, efallai ddim. Nid yw'r cwrs hwn yn cymryd bod rhaid iddynt gael profiad a chymwysterau.

Gyda'r ddwy ragdybiaeth hon - bod yna grŵp a bod yna arweinydd - hoffem gynnig y llawlyfr hwn fel adnodd i gyd-fynd ag unrhyw un o'r modiwlau Byw a Dysgu. Llawlyfr am grwpiau ac am arweinwyr yw hwn. Nid yw'n rhoi sylw i bob manylyn, ond yn hytrach ei nod fydd rhoi cyflwyniad byr i chi o rai o brif nodweddion hwyluso dysgu a thrin a thrafod fel grŵp bach.

Mae arwain grwpiau bach yn gyfle gwych i'r arweinydd a'r cyfranwyr fel ei gilydd. Pan fo grwpiau'n gweithio'n dda, mae'n creu cwlwm rhwng pawb, un sy'n aml yn ymestyn y tu hwnt i fywyd y grŵp ei hun. Mae deinameg ymddiriedaeth, gonestrwydd, bod yn agored, rhannu, lletygarwch, cariad a maddeuant yn dwyn ffrwyth yn y 'stafell fyw, yn neuadd yr eglwys, y festri neu o amgylch bwrdd y gegin (i enwi dim ond rhai o'n hoff fannau cyfarfod).

Nid 'llawlyfr sut i...' yw hwn. Yn hytrach, mae'n cymryd y bydd llawer o'r ddinameg yn digwydd wrth gadw rhai hanfodion pwysig mewn cof. Mae'r llawlyfr hwn, felly, yn ymwneud â'r ychydig hanfodion hynny: arwain, cyd-ddeall, ennyn diddordeb. Yng nghefn y llawlyfr, fe welwch chi restr o adnoddau defnyddiol er mwyn i chi allu treiddio ymhellach i'r pwnc hwn.

I gloi, rydym yn gobeithio y bydd y llawlyfr hwn yn eich helpu i fod yn esiampl o arwain, cyd-ddeall ac ennyn diddordeb yn eich grŵp Byw a Dysgu.



Welcome to Living & Learning, the Church in Wales' suite of resources for discipleship and local ministry training. We hope these resources serve both to stimulate and to equip, to enthuse and to inform.

One of the significant features of Living & Learning is that it takes place within small groups, and primarily through guided discussion. It is not a resource for the lecture hall, nor is it intended for independent study. It is aimed, rather, at that kind of deep and life-changing learning that takes place in a community of relationships.

To say that assumes two things. First, it assumes that there is such a community in place. Most of the Living & Learning resources will be used by groups that already exist in some form, whether in a Ministry Area, a Parish, a home group, or any other such setting. In some cases, a group may be started, or perhaps renewed, in order to work their way through one or more of the modules in this collection. In either case, Living & Learning has been designed to meet the needs of existing groups, or of new groups.

The second assumption to mention is that each group will have a leader of some sort. This suite of resources does not assume that the leader will have any particular academic expertise, or that they will hold any particular qualification. They may, or they may not. This course does not assume that they must.

With those two assumptions – that there is a group, and that there is a leader – we would like to offer this handbook as a resource to accompany any of the Living & Learning modules. This handbook is about groups, and about leaders. It is not exhaustive, but it aims to give a brief introduction to some of the key dynamics at work in facilitating small group learning and discussion.

Leading small groups is a wonderful opportunity for both the leader and the participants. When groups function well, there forms a bond between all, and often one that extends beyond the life of the group itself. Dynamics of trust, honesty, openness, sharing, hospitality, love, and forgiveness take shape in the living room, the church hall, the vestry, or around the kitchen table (to name a few favourite meeting places).

This handbook is not a 'how to manual' for achieving those dynamics. It assumes, rather, that many of those dynamics will take place when a few key convictions are kept in mind. This handbook, then, is about those few convictions: leading, relating, enthusing. At the back of the handbook you will find a list of resources that will be helpful if you would like to explore this topic further.

With that, we hope that this handbook will equip you to be an embodiment of leading, relating, and enthusing in your Living & Learning group.



Arwain

“ *A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.*¹”

Oes angen arweinydd ar grwpiau bach?

Pe byddem am ateb y cwestiwn yn y pennawd, efallai y byddem am roi'r ate nodweddiadol Anglicanaidd, sef “Ydyn” a “Nac ydyn”. Ar y llaw arall, mae'n berffaith resymol tybio bod grwpiau bach angen arweinydd. Wedi'r cwbl, bydd bron pob math o grŵp y byddwn wedi dod ar eu traws yn yr eglwys ag arweinydd. Efallai bod angen gofyn cwestiwn mwy penodol: pam mae angen arweinydd ar y grwpiau hyn? Neu'n well fyth: pa fath o arweinydd sydd ei angen er mwyn cynnal grwpiau Byw a Dysgu llwyddiannus? Nid llawlyfr 'sut i' na rhestr o rinweddau hanfodol arweinydd (sy'n aml fel petaen nhw'n newid, yn dibynnu ar bwy sy'n creu'r rhestr) yw'r adran hon – Arwain. Yn hytrach, cyfres o arsylwadau a all ymddangos yn amlwg i rai, ac efallai'n llai amlwg i eraill. Mae'r hyn sydd raid i arweinydd wneud gyda grwpiau bach, o safbwynt Byw a Dysgu, yn fwy cyfyngedig na'r disgwyl efallai.

Os buoch chi'n gysylltiedig â grwpiau bach o ryw fath yn y gorffennol, byddwch wedi sylwi fod ansawdd grŵp bach yn aml yn rhagori ar y perthnasau unigol oddi mewn iddo. Mae rhyw fath o 'ffactor x' cyfunol mewn grwpiau bach. Heb os, gall gymryd cryn amser i ennill ei blwyf: mae grwpiau newydd yn aml braidd yn stiff, gyda diffyg ymateb neu fawr o ddiddordeb yn y deunyddiau sydd ar gael. Dros amser, fodd bynnag, gall grŵp ddatblygu'n rhagorach o lawer na'i aelodau unigol; ac wrth i hyn ddigwydd, bydd rhwydwaith o berthnasau yn ffurfio ohonynt eu hunain, heb orfod gorddibynnu ar arweinydd. Beth mae hyn yn ei olygu, yn y bôn, yw bod grwpiau bach yn sbarduno ac yn cynnal eu hunain. Unwaith mae'r injan wedi'i thanio, mae'r cerbyd yn mynd yn ei flaen.

Tydy hyn ddim yn golygu'r diwedd arnoch chi fel arweinydd. Ond mae'ch rôl chi fel arweinydd yn fwy o her. Rydych chi yno i arwain, ar ryw ystyr, ond mewn grŵp bach sy'n dysgu, rydych chi yno yn y bôn i fod yn gefn er mwyn i'r ddynmeg hunangynhyrchiol, hunanysgogol hon barhau. Mae'r arweinydd yn galluogi'r ddynmeg hon i ddigwydd. Yn aml iawn, gallech ddweud bod yr arweinydd yno i gilio i'r neilltu fel... arweinydd.

Yn 2011, cyhoeddwyd llyfr diddorol gan yr Athro Richard Hackman o Harvard, a oedd yn trin a thrafod gwaith tîm mewn sefydliadau, a beth oedd yn gwneud iddo ffynnu a llwyddo. Ni fydd llawer o'r llyfr yn ymddangos yn arbennig o berthnasol i Fyw a Dysgu, ond mae un darn heb os - sef yr hyn a elwir yn rheol 60-30-10.² Bu yntau ac eraill yn arsylwi ar rôl yr arweinydd mewn grwpiau/adrannau bach mewn sefydliad, cyn dod i'r casgliad canlynol: ffactorau a oedd yn bodoli cyn ffurfio'r grŵp (personoliaethau, etheg gwaith unigol, amgylchiadau ac ati) oedd yn gyfrifol am oddeutu 60% o lwyddiant grŵp yn y pen draw. Roedd y modd yr oedd y grŵp wedi'i drefnu, ei lansio neu ei rannu'n logistaidd (hynny yw, pa mor ddidrafferth y ffurfiodd y grŵp) yn gyfrifol am tua 30% o lwyddiant y grŵp. Yn olaf, dim ond 10% o lwyddiant y grŵp maes o law oedd yn dibynnu ar hyfforddiant a chyfraniad parhaus yr arweinydd. Dim ond 10%. Mae hynny'n rhoi rôl ac



Lead

“ *A community is the mental and spiritual condition of knowing that the place is shared, and that the people who share the place define and limit the possibilities of each other's lives. It is the knowledge that people have of each other, their concern for each other, their trust in each other, the freedom with which they come and go among themselves.*¹”

Do Small Groups Need a Leader?

If we are to answer the question in the heading, we might want to give that characteristically Anglican answer of Yes, and No. On the one hand, it is perfectly reasonable to assume that small groups need a leader. After all, almost every model of group that we will have encountered in the church will have had a leader. On the other hand, we might need to phrase that question a bit more pointedly: why do these groups need a leader? Or better still: what kind of leader is needed for Living & Learning groups to run successfully? This section of the module – ‘Lead’ – is neither a how-to manual, nor is it a catalogue of essential leadership qualities (which often seem to change depending on who is making the list). It is, rather, a series of observations that may seem obvious to some, and perhaps less obvious to others. What the leader has to do with small groups, in the view of Living & Learning, is rather more limited than we may have expected.

If you have been involved in small groups of some sort in the past, you will have found that the quality of a small group often exceeds the individual relationships within it. There is something of a collective ‘x factor’ that is present in small groups. Undoubtedly this can take some time to develop: new groups often feel a bit stiff, they may seem unresponsive, or even disinterested in the material at hand. Over time, however, a group can mature into something that exceeds the sum of its parts; and as this happens, a network of relationships will form on their own, without an over-reliance on the leader. What that means, in essence, is that small groups are self-propelling. Once the engine starts to run, it often runs itself.

By no means does this make you redundant as a leader. It does, however, make your role as a leader tricky. You are there to lead, in some sense, but in small group learning your role will exist primarily to ‘hold the space’, so to speak, for this self-generating, self-propelling dynamic to exist and carry on. The leader holds the space for this dynamic to take place. You might say that in many cases the leader is there to get out of the way as ... the leader.

In 2011 a fascinating book was published by Harvard Professor Richard Hackman, in which he looked at team work within organisations, and what made it thrive and succeed. Much from that book won't appear immediately relevant to Living & Learning, but one piece certainly is. It is what Hackman calls the 60-30-10 rule.² He and others observed the role of a leader in small groups/departments within an organisation, and concluded the following: roughly 60% of the group's ultimate success was attributable to factors that existed before the group formed (personalities, individual work ethic, circumstances, etc). Roughly 30% of the group's ultimate success was attributable to how the group was organised, launched, or sorted out logistically (i.e., how smooth the formation into a group was). Finally, only 10% of the group's ultimate success relied upon the specific coaching and ongoing input of the leader. Only 10%. That puts the role and ongoing significance

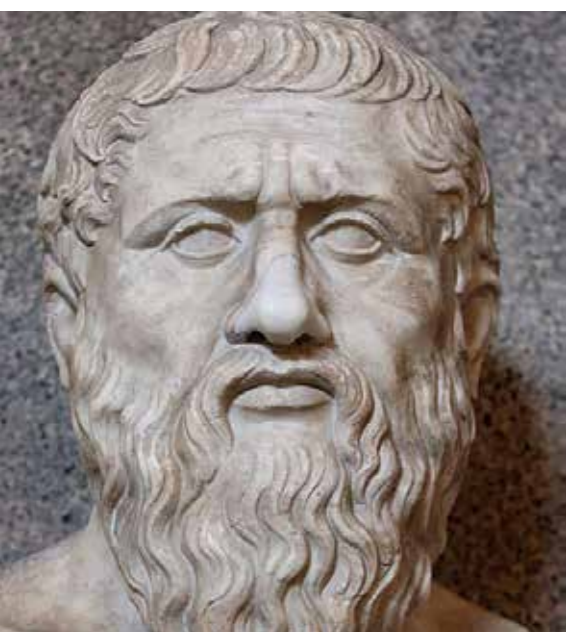


arwyddocâd parhaus yr arweinydd (neu efallai ein golwg ni o'r arweinydd) mewn cyd-destun digon cyffredin. Bydd llwyddiant eich grŵp yn dibynnu ar eich arweiniad chi felly, ond mewn ffordd unigryw.

Felly, mae grŵp bach - sy'n llwyddiannus - yn datblygu fel injan sy'n gallu cynnal ei hun, a'ch rôl chi fel arweinydd fydd hwyluso'r ddynameg hon trwy fod yn bresennol, ond gan gadw o'r ffordd fel arweinydd. Byddwn ni'n trafod rhagor am yr ail bwynt isod, ond mae'n werth gwneud rhywfaint o gymariaethau hanesyddol o grwpiau sy'n cynnal eu hunain.

Mae'r syniad o ddysgu yn y gymuned, neu trwy gyfrwng deialog, cyn hyned â dysg ei hun. Efallai ei bod hi'n syniad da cyfeirio at dair enghraifft o hanes sy'n cyd-fynd â hyn (er nad oes digon o le yma i wneud cyfiawnder â phob un).

1. Plato: Dysgu trwy Ddeialog



Daw'r cyntaf o'r hen Roeg, ac yn benodol o ysgrifau swmpus yr athronydd Plato (428/7-348/7 CC). Gydag ambell eithriad, mae'r rhan fwyaf o'i waith ar ffurf deialogau. Ni fydd angen i chi ddarllen llawer o waith Plato cyn sylwi bod ei feddyliau amrywiol yn glir, yn llawn strwythur a dyfnder, a'u bod ar ffurf sgysiaid ffuglennol rhwng cymeriadau. Mae' debyg i ddarllen un o ddramâu Shakespeare, dim ond bod y pwnc dan sylw (tipyn) yn anoddach i'w daclo. Ni fyddai fawr o bwys am hyn, ond doedd athroniaeth heb ei fapio ar ffurf deialog ar y pryd - fwy na heddiw. Trwy fframio holl ymdrechion meddwl a dysgu o fewn sgwrs, roedd Plato yn cyflwyno datganiad am sut mae pobl yn dysgu. Maen nhw'n dysgu orau ac yn cael y budd pennaf, ynghyd â mewnnoli mater am gyfnod hwy, trwy sgwrsio. Datblygodd traddodiad cyfan o ddysgu trwy gyfrwng sgwrs (/deialog/cymuned) o'r model hwn gan Plato (bu athronydd arall, Aristotlys, yn astudio yma cyn sefydlu ei ganolfan ddysg ei hun).

2. 'Mishnah' Iddewiaeth: Dysgu gyda Chyfeillion



Daw'r ail fudiad o ddysgu mewn cymuned o lyfr bach iawn o'r enw 'Mishnah'. Dyma gasgliad o ddysgeidiaeth lafar athrawon Iddewig (neu'r Rabbi). Mae darn bach o'r Mishnah yn cynnwys cyfarwyddiadau ar sut i ddysgu ym mhresenoldeb Duw. Y cyngor yw, 'Mynnwch athro, ac fe gewch chi ffrind' (Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 1:6). Athro a ffrind: mae'n gyngor cofiadwy. Ac o hynny, gallwn gadw hyn mewn cof: mae dysgu am Dduw heb gyfaill, heb gydymaith, yn llwybr hir ac unig. Mae gan Dduw gynllun gwell.

Mae'r dywediad bach hwn o hanes Iddewiaeth wedi creu traddodiad cyfan o ddysgu mewn cymuned mewn gwirionedd. Does dim angen rhyw ymdrech orchestol i fynd i'r afael â'r Ysgrythur, a dysgeidiaeth yr Ysgrythur,

ond yn hytrach meddwl agored a pharodrwydd i ddysgu oddi wrth ein gilydd, mewn sgwrs, ac yng nghyd-destun cyfeillgarwch.

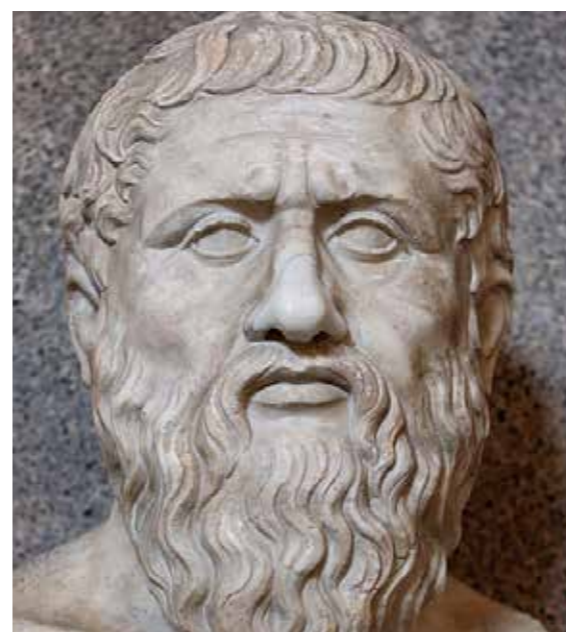


of the leader (or perhaps simply our view of the leader) into quite a humble position. The success of your group will have to do with your leadership, but in a unique way.

So small groups – when they work well – become like engines that can run themselves, and your role as a leader will be to facilitate this dynamic through being present, but getting out of the way as leader. We'll say a bit more about this second point below, but it is worth making a little historical gesture toward the notion that groups are self-propelling.

That learning most fruitfully takes place in community, or in dialogue, is an observation as old as learning itself. We might note three moments from history that uphold this claim (though there is not space here to do justice to each of these).

1. Plato: Learning through Dialogue



The first comes from ancient Greece, and specifically in the bulk of writings of the philosopher Plato (428/7-348/7 BC). With only a few exceptions, the bulk of Plato's work comes to us in the form of dialogues. You won't need to read much of Plato's work before you see that his various lines of thought gain clarity, structure, and depth, through fictional conversations between characters. They are very much like reading a Shakespeare play, only the subject matter is sometimes (quite) a bit trickier to navigate. This wouldn't be particularly noteworthy, but philosophy was not then – nor does it tend to be now – mapped out in the form of a dialogue. By placing the whole thinking and learning endeavour within a framework of conversation, Plato was making a statement about how people learn. They learn most fruitfully, and internalise a matter most enduringly, through conversation. A whole tradition of learning in conversation (/dialogue/community) grew out of this model in Plato (another philosopher, Aristotle, studied here before founding his own learning centre).

2. Judaism's Mishnah: Learning with Friends



The second moment of learning in community comes from a very small teaching in what is called the 'Mishnah'. This is the collected oral teaching of Judaism's teachers (or Rabbis). In one small section of the Mishnah there is a teaching on how one should approach learning in God's presence. The advice is, 'Get yourself a teacher, and find yourself a friend' (Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 1:6). A teacher and a friend: it is a memorable piece of advice. And from it we may take this: learning about God without a friend, or companion, is a long and lonely road. God has a better plan.

This seemingly small sound bite from Jewish history has actually created a whole tradition of learning in community. To approach Scripture, and to

approach teachings around and about Scripture, requires not some herculean resolve to master a topic, but an openness and willingness to learn from each other, in conversation, and in a context of friendship.



3. Actau 2 - perthnasau llorweddol

Daw ein trydedd foment - a'r olaf - o hanes, o'r Testament Newydd, ac yn benodol o lyfr Actau, pennod 2. Daw ein darn o ddiddordeb tua'r diwedd:

Daeth ofn ar bob enaid; yr oedd rhyfeddodau ac arwyddion lawer yn cael eu gwneud drwy'r apostolion. Yr oedd yr holl gredinwyr ynghyd yn dal pob peth yn gyffredin. Byddent yn gwerthu eu heiddo a'u meddiannau, ac yn eu rhannu rhwng pawb, yn ôl fel y byddai angen pob un. A chan ddyfalbarhau beunydd yn unfryd yn y deml, a thorri bara yn eu tai, yr oeddent yn cyd-fwyta mewn llawenydd a symledd calon, dan foli Duw a chael ewyllys da'r holl bobl. Ac yr oedd yr Arglwydd yn ychwanegu beunydd at y gynulleidfa y rhai oedd yn cael eu hachub (Actau 2:43-47)

Yn eglwys ffyniannus Jerwsalem, a oedd yn dal i lewyrchu yng ngwres a bwrlwm y Pentecost, roedd ymdeimlad sydyn a diatal o gonsyrn Duw i groesawu eraill i'r gymuned o gredinwyr. Ar ddiwrnod pregeth gofiadwy Pedr (Actau 2:41), ymunodd tair mil o bobl â'r mudiad newydd hwn (Actau 2:41).

Ond nid dyna ddiwedd hanes yr eglwys: roedd yno hefyd ymdeimlad bod ansawdd bywyd yn y gymuned - wedi i rywun ymuno â'r gymuned - yn gwneud byd o wahaniaeth. Roedd yr eglwys fore wedi ei seilio'i hun ar fodel o ryngweithio ben i lawr y soniodd yr Iesu amdano, 'Felly bydd y rhai olaf yn flaenaf a'r rhai blaenaf yn olaf' (Mathew 20:16).

Yn yr adnodau uchod, fe welwn ni ddarlun cadarn o'r gymuned gynnar hon yn mynd i'r afael â'r bywyd o chwith hwn gyda'i gilydd. Mae'n sefyllfa ben i lawr am nad yw'n batrwm y byddwn ni, fel bodau dynol, yn ei fabwysiadu'n naturiol. Mae'n troi cyfundrefn werthoedd drechol hierarchaeth ar ei phen, ac yn cofleidio cyfundrefn werthoedd o wasanaeth ac aberth cariadus.



Yr hyn sy'n nodedig yn y darn hwn ar gyfer arweinwyr grwpiau bach yw'r gair 'holl'. Does dim rheswm pam - boed yn yr iaith Roeg sy'n sail i'n cyfieithiadau Cymraeg a Saesneg, boed mewn dehongliad ehangach o hyd a lled yr Actau, neu mewn rhyw ddiwinyddiaeth a briodolwn i'r eglwys fore - y dylai'r "holl" hwn eithrio arweinwyr/apostolion y gymuned hon. Mae'r apostolion wedi'u cynnwys yn y gair "holl" hwnnw, a dylem ystyried arweinwyr, yn ogystal â chyfranogwyr, yn rhai sy'n 'dal pob peth yn gyffredin', ac yn 'gwerthu eu heiddo'. Nid oedd unrhyw le i arweinyddiaeth

yn y model hwn fynnu safle o fewn cyfundrefn hierarchaeth. Yn wir, mae'n ymddangos bod Iesu wedi rhagweld y demtasiwn hon yn yr eglwys, ac wedi mynd i'r afael â'r mater yn uniongyrchol (Marc 10:35-45).

Efallai eu bod nhw'n ymddangos yn dri lle rhyfedd i fynd am ysbrydoliaeth, ond hwyrach mai dyma sy'n gwneud y tair enghraifft yn gofiadwy. Gallwn ddefnyddio pob un i ddysgu rhywbeth sy'n berthnasol i arwain grwpiau bach o fewn Byw a Dysgu. Yn gyntaf, mae ein holl gysyniad diwylliannol o ddysgu wedi'i wreiddio yn Plato; ac i Plato, roedd dysgu yn golygu bod mewn deialog ag eraill. Deialog a sgwrsio fydd yn cynnal grŵp Byw a Dysgu llwyddiannus trwy gwrs. Yn ail, fel rhan o'r Eglwys, rydym yn sefyll fel rhan o draddodiad Cristnogol Iddewig sy'n gallu dysgu o ddysgeidiaeth Mishnah: er mwyn astudio ym mhresenoldeb Duw, mae angen nid yn unig cyfraniad ond cyfeillgarwch hefyd. Mae ymgymryd â modiwlau Byw a Dysgu yn golygu ymgymryd â chyfeillgarwch a chwmnïaeth ar hyd siwrnai ein ffydd. *Ac yn olaf, mae dysgu gyda'n gilydd yn golygu hynny - gyda'n gilydd. O'r holl bethau y gallwn eu cymryd o Actau 2 (ac mae llond gwlad ohonynt), un o'r rheiny yw bod set o berthnasau llorweddol yn y gymuned honno, a'r canlyniad oedd profiad grymus o bresenoldeb Duw.*



3. Acts 2 – horizontal relationships

Our third and final moment from history comes from the New Testament, specifically the book of Acts, chapter 2. The passage of interest comes at the end:

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved. (Acts 2:43-47)

In this burgeoning church of Jerusalem, still glowing with the heat and pulse of Pentecost, there was a sudden and irrepressible sense of God's concern to welcome others into the believing community. On the very day of Peter's memorable sermon (Acts 2:14-36), three thousand people joined this new movement (Acts 2:41).

But the church didn't stop there: there was also a sense that the quality of life in the community – after one had joined this community – made all the difference. The early church patterned itself on that upside-down model of interaction that Jesus had mentioned previously, 'The last will be first, and the first will be last' (Matt. 20:16).

In our passage above, we find a robust depiction of this early community undertaking this kind of upside-down life together. It is upside-down, because it is not a pattern that we, as humans, would naturally adopt. It flips the dominant value systems of hierarchy, and embraces a value system of loving service and sacrifice.



What is particularly noteworthy in this passage for small group leadership is that word 'all' in the passage. There is no reason – whether in the Greek language behind our English translations, whether in some wider construal of Acts' shape, or whether in some theology we attribute to the early church – that this 'all' should exclude the leaders/apostles of this community. The apostles are wrapped up into that word 'all', and so we should see the leaders, as well as the participants, 'having all things in common', and 'selling their possessions'. There was no room for leadership

in this model to assume a hierarchical seat. Indeed, Jesus seems to have foreseen this temptation in the church, and to have addressed it directly (Mark 10:35-45).

They may seem an odd three places to go for inspiration, but perhaps that is what makes these snapshots memorable. From each we learn something for leading small groups within Living & Learning. First, our whole cultural concept of learning has its roots in Plato; and for Plato, to learn was to dialogue with others. Dialogue and conversation are what will carry a successful Living & Learning group through a course. Second, as part of the church we stand in a wide Judeo-Christian tradition that can stand to learn from the Mishnah's teaching: to study in God's presence requires not only some input, but friendship as well. To undertake Living & Learning modules is to undertake friendship and companionship on our journey of faith. *And finally, to learn together is to learn together.* Of all the things we might take away from Acts 2 (and there are many), one is that there existed a horizontal set of relationships in that community, and the result was a powerful experience of God's presence.

Yr arweinydd a gofod: Iesu, lletygarwch a phŵer



MYn Luc 10:1-24, cawn hanes yr Iesu yn ei mentro hi braidd, ond gyda chanlyniadau gwerth chweil. Yn y stori, mae'r Iesu yn anfon 72 o'i ddilynwyr i gyflwyno teyrnas Dduw mewn gair a gweithredoedd. Maen nhw'n ymwybodol o'r peryglon, ac wedi'u rhybuddio i beidio mynd ag unrhyw eiddo o bwys gyda nhw. Daeth y dilynwyr hyn yn gynrychiolwyr, yn llysgenhadon bron, o'r Iesu ei hun (10:16). Pan aiff rhywbeth yn iawn, yr Iesu sy'n gyfrifol; ond pan gawsant eu gwrthod, yr Iesu a gâi ei wrthod. Mae'r 72 yn dychwelyd ymhen hir a hwyr, ac ar ben eu digon, 'Arglwydd, y mae hyd yn oed y cythreuliaid yn ymddarostwng inni yn dy enw di!' (Luc 10:17). Maen nhw wedi cael rhagflas o rym a thrugaredd Crist (sydd, i raddau helaeth iawn, yn rhagflas o'r Pentecost).

Mae darn arbennig yn llywio ein ffordd o feddwl am arweinyddiaeth grwpiau bach, sef:

Pa dŷ bynnag yr ewch i mewn iddo, dywedwch yn gyntaf, 'Tangnefedd i'r teulu hwn'. Os bydd yno rywun tangnefeddus, bydd eich tangnefedd yn gorffwys arno ef; onid e, bydd yn dychwelyd atoch chwi. Arhoswch yn y tŷ hwnnw, a bwyta ac yfed yr hyn a gewch ganddynt, oherwydd y mae'r gweithiwr yn haeddu ei gyflog. Peidiwch â symud o dy i dy. (Luc 10:5-7)

Y farn am y weinidogaeth gynrychioliadol hon o Iesu yw na ddylai dilynwyr wahodd eraill i'w cartrefi eu hunain, ond yn hytrach gwahodd eu hunain i gartrefi eraill. O ran ein cyd-destun ni, mae hyn yn codi teimladau o embaras, o chwithigrwydd, ac efallai'n enghraifft o 'bechod anfaddeuol' o safbwynt moesau gorllewinol - ni ddylech wthio'ch hun ar rywun arall neu gymryd mantais.



Yn hinsawdd ddiwylliannol cyfnod yr Iesu, efallai nad oedd hi mor amlwg bod rhywun yn cymryd mantais - roedd cyd-fwyta yn beth cyffredin iawn, boed fel teulu neu fel cymuned leol. Ond mae'r gorchymyn i fynd i gartrefi eraill yn mynd llawer pellach na hyn, ac mae i'w wneud yn bennaf â phŵer, gan fod pobl yn dueddol o gymryd mantais ar letygarwch (er yn rhinwedd) yn fwy nag unrhyw rinwedd arall o bosib. Wrth wahodd eraill i'n gofod ein hunain, yn ffisegol neu beidio, rydym yn cyflwyno dynameg y gellir ei dehongli mewn sawl ffordd: ni yw'r darparwr gwasanaethau, nhw yw'r defnyddwyr. Ni sy'n cyflwyno'r fwydlen, mewn ffordd, a nhw sy'n bwyta. Mae gennym rywbeth i'w gynnig - rhywbeth nad oes ganddyn nhw ar hyn o bryd - trwy rinwedd bod yn ein gofod ni. Mae lletygarwch yn fwy cymhleth nag y byddem yn ei feddwl - efallai ein bod yn meddwl mai ni sy'n eu helpu nhw, ond a yw hynny'n golygu eu bod nhw angen ein cymorth ni? Meddyliwch am Iesu yn gwahodd pobl i'w gartref ei hun, ac yn mynnu eu bod nhw'n dilyn rheolau'r tŷ: rhaid i chi wisgo'n addas, cadw'n dawel nes bydd gofyn i chi siarad, a gadael erbyn 20:30 ar y dot, gan ei fod angen ei gwsg. Mae byd o wahaniaeth rhwng yr Iesu hwnnw, gyda'i ymdeimlad o rym a rheolaeth, â'r Iesu go iawn, a'r hyn y gwyddom amdano.

Ni ddylem deimlo'n rhy anobeithiol am hyn. Bu lletygarwch wrth wraidd dyheadau craidd yr eglwys erioed ar gyfer ei bywyd cymunedol (Rhufeiniaid 12:13; Hebraeid 13:2). O'i wneud yn dda, mae'n brawf o gynnig o gariad a chyfeillgarwch Duw. Ond beth mae "lletygarwch da" yn ei olygu?

Roedd cyfarwyddyd yr Iesu i fynd i gartrefi eraill yn enghraifft o droi dynameg lletygarwch ben i waered. Mae mynd i ofod rhywun arall yn fater o droi'r cynnig yn ymofyniad, o ddarparu i dderbyn. Efallai y gallwn nodi Urddau Cardod hanesyddol yr Eglwys (mynachod oedd wedi tyngu adduned i dlodi, a olygai eu bod yn dibynnu ar eraill) fel enghraifft o'r hunan-wahodd hwn.

Ond beth sydd gan hyn i'w wneud gyda grwpiau bach Byw a Dysgu? Wrth arwain grwpiau bach, bydd y ddynameg letygarwch hon bob amser yn codi ei phen, a gallai'r arweinydd ymgymryd â rôl darparwr heb yn

The Leader and Space: Jesus, Hospitality, and Power



In Luke 10:1-24, we find a story of Jesus doing something a bit risky, but with impressive results. In the story, Jesus sends out seventy-two of his followers to bring the kingdom of God in word and deed. They are aware of the dangers, and they are not to take any significant possessions with them. These followers become representatives, almost ambassadors, of Jesus himself (10:16). When something goes right, it is Jesus who has done it; when they are rejected, it is Jesus who shoulders the rejection. The seventy-two return after some time, and they are elated, 'Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!' (Luke 10:17). They have experienced a foretaste of Jesus' power and compassion (which is, in significant ways, a foretaste of Pentecost).

There is one part of this passage that especially informs our thinking about small group leadership, which is this:

Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. (Luke 10:5-7)

The view of this representative ministry of Jesus is that the followers are not to invite others into their own homes, but to invite themselves into the homes of others. In terms of application to our context, this feels embarrassing, awkward, and perhaps the sole 'unforgiveable sin' in western cultural etiquette – "one mustn't impose upon others".



In Jesus' own cultural climate, the imposition may have been less obvious – eating together was common practice, whether as a family or a local community. But the command to enter the houses of others goes further than this, and it has chiefly to do with power, for hospitality (although a virtue) is open to an abuse of power perhaps more than any other virtue. When we invite others into our own space, physical or not, we introduce a dynamic that is open to all sorts of manipulation: we are the service provider, they the consumers. We set the menu, so to speak, they eat the food. We have something to offer that they – by virtue of being in our space – don't possess at that moment. Hospitality is more complicated than we might think – we think we are helping them, but does that mean we think they need our help? Picture a Jesus inviting people into his own home, and requesting that they abide by his house rules: one must dress accordingly, speak only when spoken to, and be out by 20:30 sharp, as he needs his beauty sleep. That Jesus, with its sense of control and power, seems wildly divergent from the real Jesus and what we know about him.

We shouldn't be too pessimistic about this. Hospitality has always resided at the heart of the church's core aspirations for its communal life (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2). Done well, it is a witness to God's offer of love and friendship. But what does it mean to do 'hospitality well'?

Jesus' direction to enter the homes of others was an example of turning the tables on the power dynamics of hospitality. To enter another's space is to turn from offering to seeking, from providing to receiving. One might even note the church's historic Mendicant Orders (monks with a vow of poverty which makes them dependent on others) as an example of this self-inviting.

What has this to do with Living & Learning small groups? Leading small groups will always face this dynamic of hospitality, and with it the leader can unwittingly take on an identity of a provider: perhaps a provider of a physical place to meet, perhaps a provider of hot drinks, perhaps a provider of chitchat, or perhaps a provider



wybod iddo/iddi: fe all fod yn ddarparwr man cyfarfod ffisegol, yn ddarparwr paneidiau efallai; yn ddarparwr cyfle i fân sgwrsio, neu'n ddarparwr IQ penodol. Efallai y gallwch ddarparu'r rhain i gyd. Ond bydd angen i'r arweinydd hefyd fod yn ymwybodol o'r ddynmeg sydd ar waith wrth gynnig neu ddarparu yn y meysydd hyn (ac eraill).

Er mwyn symud i ffwrdd o'r ddynmeg anefnyddiol sy'n gysylltiedig ag arwain a lletygarwch, mae llawer o grwpiau Byw a Dysgu'n penderfynu cyfarfod yn rhywle 'niwtral' sy'n gyfforddus ac anfygythiol yn hytrach nag yng nghartre'r arweinydd neu mewn tŷ cwrdd. Hefyd, mae grwpiau'n aml yn rhannu cyfrifoldebau y byddai'r arweinydd fel arall yn teimlo rheidrwydd i'w hysgwyddo: popeth o ddarparu paneidiau i osod cadeiriau, neu hyd yn oed arwain sesiynau eu hunain. Nid yw'r opsiwn olaf yn golygu nad oes angen arweinydd; oherwydd fel y soniwyd uchod, nid yw arweinydd grŵp Byw a Dysgu yno'n unswydd i gynnal y gofod er mwyn i ddynmeg y grŵp ennill ei phlwyf. Os yw hynny wedi digwydd, yna mae'r arweinydd wedi gwneud gwaith rhagorol.

Cwestiynau i'w hystyried

1. Sut ydych chi'n credu y gallai arweinydd grŵp Byw a Dysgu 'gynnal y gofod' er mwyn i ddynmeg grŵp ennill ei phlwyf? Oes unrhyw beth y gallai'r arweinydd ei annog? Neu geisio ei leihau?
2. Yn eich cyd-destun penodol chi, beth yw'r ffordd orau o reoli'r ddynmeg lletygarwch o fewn grŵp?



of a certain IQ. You may very well be able to offer all of these things. But the leader will also have to be aware of the dynamics at work in any offering or provision in these (and other) areas.

To get away from unhelpful dynamics associated with leading and hospitality, many Living & Learning groups choose to meet not in the leader's home or place of worship, but somewhere 'neutral' that is comfortable and non-threatening. Likewise, groups often share out the responsibilities that a leader might otherwise feel the need to take on: everything from hot drinks to setting out chairs, even to leading the sessions themselves. This last option does not make the leader redundant; for as we mentioned above, the leader in a Living & Learning group is there primarily to hold the space for group dynamics to take root. If that has happened, then the leader has done a brilliant job.

Questions to Consider

1. How do you think a leader of a Living & Learning group might be able to 'hold the space' for group dynamics to take root on their own? Are there things that the leader could try to encourage? Or minimise?
2. In your specific context, how do you think the hospitality dynamic could be best managed in a group setting?