



THE NEXT LEVEL OF MEN'S MINISTRIES

PRESENTING THE RELATIONAL DIAMOND by Minner Labrador

From rules of Baseball to the rules of Relationships in Men's Ministries

Just as in a baseball game where the team moves from first base to home base in the diamond. The small group experience can be described in what we call the relational diamond. What happens at first base:

1. FIRST BASE

What happens at first base:

- This is the acquaintance level.
- Men begin to accept one another. Romans 15:7.
- The goal at this level is trusting one another

At this level you need to identify the group's purpose or design. How much emphasis will the group place on supporting one another? How much emphasis on Bible study or on other materials? How much time will the group invest in projects?

It is at this level where you decide what kind of group you will have. Will it bring together men with affinity (men with the same preferences, e.g., golfers etc.) or diversity (men with different preferences and likes).

You also negotiate with the men about how long will the group last. Will the group be open, allowing anyone to enter at any time, or closed, allowing only those who started the process to be in the group till the time the group negotiated to end? Other things to consider is to decide how much sharing of pain and practical struggles will the group allow. At this level it is important to let the group know one another by focusing on acceptance and time spent together.

2. SECOND BASE

What happens at second base:

- This is the level where men begin to see themselves as friends.
- Men begin to encourage one another. Hebrew 3:13.
- The goal at this level is confidence in one another.

It is at this level that the group moves into deeper relationships. This level helps men to understand each other and to be committed to each other. Men will discover that they see things differently as they grow together. It is important to agree from the beginning that it is ok to disagree.

3. THIRD BASE

What happens at third base:

- This is the level where men begin to see themselves as brothers in Christ.
- Men begin to exhort (admonish) one another. Colossians 3:16.
- The goal at this level is to create a sense of accountability in love.

At this level men learn how to worship more intimately. They agree to certain covenants which make accountability possible.

- To affirm one another
- To be consistent in meeting
- To pray for one another
- To be open
- To be honest
- To hold confidentiality
- Giving permission to hold accountable

The new definition of relationship provides real freedom and acceptance. In its confine men express their commitment to God, worship, being themselves, and being shaped into what God wants them to be. This is the level where significant change and growth takes place.

4. HOME BASE

What happens at the plate?

- This is the level where men begin to move towards leadership and ministry involvement in the homes and other opportunities.
- Men begin to experience Christian maturity in building a Christ-like character. (Romans 8:28-29).
- The goal at this level is to coach another team such as family and friends.

It is at this level where men begin to find their place in serving the family and the church. The group has been preparing for service. They are now ready to start the process of serving. The group also sees the need to continue in the process of sanctification.

Men will discover the unique contribution they will make through the acceptance of the great commission and commandment to reach out to those in need in their families, the church, and the world.

Men will begin to recognize the tools they will need to accomplish this call of representing Christ at home, church, and the world. Reaching home base means that the men have moved from being an observer to being a leader, one who serves.