

ENDORSEMENTS

Before our ABIDE group began many of us were disconnected from God and we did not have a unified direction. Now we are becoming better disciples, striving to live within the will of God, and starting to have a vision for our Church and community, one that will bring glory to God and reach and teach the lost sheep.

Josh Pruett, Team Member, Dalhart, TX

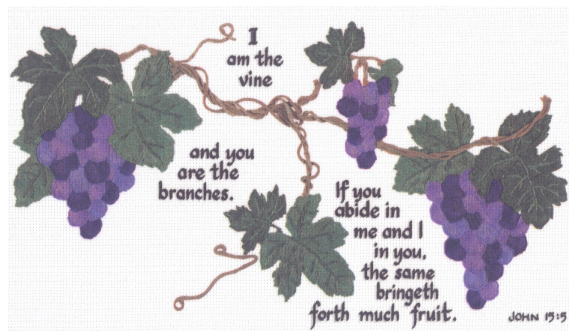
We entered into the ABIDE Process with some trepidation, but we have found it to be life-changing for our five-member team. It is amazing the bond we have establish between us. We hope that we can spread this love and enthusiasm with others. We also have great optimism about the potential impact upon our small church and community as we head into the future of this ministry - with God's help.

The ABIDE Team, Big Springs UMC,
Lecompton, KS

Spirituality has made ALL the difference in the ABIDE experience. ABIDE has brought our team members closer to God and closer to each other. We have seen the excitement from the ABIDE team spill over into our worship and other ministries. If we accomplish no more than what we have already experienced, I call the time a success and I look forward to watching God work through this team in the future.

Rev. Renee K. Easter, Lenoir, NC

ABIDE is not so much listening to experts as it is discovering together the joy of glorifying God as fruitful branches of the True Vine.



MORE INFORMATION

ABIDE is currently underway in Texas, North Carolina, and Kansas with plans to begin in several other locations across the country.

COSTS

SLI's goal is to fund most of the costs for ABIDE through major gifts and grants, partnering larger churches, and denominational resources. Participating congregations cover the remaining expenses which vary depending on the other resources.

SCHEDULING

The normal procedures to arrange for participation in an ABIDE program in your area are:

- Pre-event presentations to interested regional and/or denominational leaders by an SLI representative,
- Local coordinator chosen 6 months in advance of first event,
- SLI team leader appointed to work with local coordinator and other partner-participants,
- All locations and dates determined and cleared,
- A minimum of 10 congregational teams (a pastor and at least 3 lay participants) recruited for retreat #1 and aware of all future dates,
- An initial registration fee of \$50 to \$250 per congregation deposited 30 days in advance.

Tax-deductible contributions to help strengthen and revitalize smaller churches, can be sent to SLI at PO Box 21910 Lexington, KY 40522, OR for further information on ABIDE contact Dr. Ron Crandall at ron.c@spiritual-leadership.org or visit the SLI website at <http://spiritual-leadership.org>.

ABIDE is a ministry designed specifically for smaller congregations under the auspices of SLI Spiritual Leadership Inc. located in Lexington, KY.



ABIDE

*A Small Church Leadership Initiative
Offered by
Spiritual Leadership Inc.*



WHAT IS ABIDE?

“**ABIDE**” is the single most important instruction Jesus gave his disciples related to their life mission.

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5)

By abiding they would: glorify the Father, bear much fruit, and prove to be his disciples. (John 15:8)

BACKGROUND

- Over the last decades a growing network of leaders has emerged who are sensitive to the special issues and opportunities facing smaller congregations.
- In December 2004 fifteen such leaders from five denominations met to prayerfully explore what the Holy Spirit might be doing to create a renewal movement for smaller congregations.
- Eight of those persons continued to meet monthly to discover a model of intervention offering hope and generating inspired and informed congregational leadership teams.

This “dream team” came to be known as the Small Church Leadership Initiative, and working with SLI developed ABIDE as their initial offering.

PURPOSE

ABIDE exists to engender a widespread movement for the renewal of smaller churches that are

- Abiding in Christ,
- Advancing God’s mission,
- Alive in God’s glory.



THE LAUNCH PHASE

Years of research have revealed both the challenges faced by smaller churches and the ingredients that can lead to *turnaround*. But often such renewal can be lost during pastoral transitions. ABIDE creates leadership teams that bear “fruit that will last” (John 15:16).

ABIDE TEAMS

ABIDE teams are formed to establish long-term spiritual and strategic leadership. Teams consist of the pastor and three to ten lay persons from each church. Usually ten to fifteen congregations participate and embark together on a fifteen month journey to discover in faith and joy how to:

- Abide in Jesus and love one another,
- Learn from the best teachers available,
- Prayerfully discern the leading of the Holy Spirit for their congregation’s future,
- Trust each other to claim that future for God’s glory and greater fruitfulness.

STARTUP STRUCTURE

ABIDE begins with an overnight weekend retreat full of inspiration and instruction presented by a gifted and experienced SLI team. Participants:

- Share, celebrate, and worship together;
- Begin shaping a new mindset for their church;
- Learn the details of the ABIDE process;
- Decide if ABIDE is right for their setting and if their church is prepared to continue with the process; and if so,
- Commit to meet weekly following the assignments in the notebook provided and return a month later for a second one-day retreat.



THE INCUBATOR

An INCUBATOR provides a carefully controlled environment that allows for healthy growth. Many universities, businesses, and now churches are discovering the power of learning how to creatively move forward through participation in an incubator. The organization known as SLI (Spiritual Leadership, Inc.) is on the leading edge of introducing this model across the church and offers its resources and coaches for the year-long ABIDE Incubator that follows the first two retreats.

ABIDE INCUBATORS

At the second retreat participants continue to explore the ABIDE L3 process of *Loving, Learning, and Leading*. They also begin preparation for the ABIDE Incubator through which they develop and mature as a team of Spiritual Leaders under the guidance of an assigned SLI coach.

The weeks of team meetings between the two retreat events establishes the ABIDE Incubator pattern of investing eight hours a month for both personal growth and development of the leadership team. The year-long incubator includes:

- A third day apart that launches the incubator and provides a more detailed orientation to the coaching,
- Monthly contact with an ABIDE coach either on site or through telephone or video conferencing,
- Powerpoint and other materials for all monthly meetings of each team,
- Guidance for moving forward step by step to secure and accomplish the vision given by God to “abide” and “bear much fruit.”