Session 48: Boundaries in Helping Roles: Carry With, Not For

Phase 5 — Giving Back: Service, Leadership & Purpose · Block 2 — Mentoring & Leadership

Date: _____ My craving today (0–10): _____ One word for my week: _____

What we're learning

Session 20 drew boundaries in relationships generally; a helping role adds weight, because a newer person may test a peer's limits precisely where the peer feels safest. Money, rides after hours, messages at midnight, secrets from staff, special friendships — each crossing feels like kindness once and becomes an obligation forever. The peer's protection is pre-decision: sentences written in calm and used in the moment.

- With, not for Support sits beside a person while they make the call, write the application, tell the truth. Substitution makes the call for them and calls it love. One builds their strength; the other builds your importance.
- Money and midnight Two crossings account for most peer disasters: lending or holding money, and unlimited after-hours access. Both are pre-decided here: money never changes hands between peers, and peer help happens inside program hours and places — emergencies go to staff and the crisis protocol.
- Early is kind; late feels like betrayal State limits at the first conversation, warmly and plainly: 'I am glad to walk with you. Here is what I can do, and here is what goes to staff.' Early lines protect the relationship; late lines end it.

Goals for this session

☐ I can state the difference between bearing burdens with someone (support) and carrying loads for them (substitution)

☐ I can identify my three highest-risk boundary crossings in a helping role

☐ I can write a boundary sentence for each risk, in advance

Check-in

Finish this sentence honestly: 'When I am helping someone, the line I am most tempted to cross is ___ because it makes me feel ___.'

Discussion — write your answers

Write what you would say out loud — and more, if it comes. There is no right-length answer; there is only an honest one.

1. Which of your three risks has history behind it — where has this crossing cost you before?

2. Why does being 'the only one who understands' a newer person feel good, and why is it dangerous for both of you?

3. Say your hardest boundary sentence aloud to your partner. What makes it hard to say?

4. Which boundary sentence will be hardest to say, and what makes it hard to say?

Session 48 — Skill Practice

Boundary rehearsal (in pairs): the partner plays a newer participant making three escalating asks — hold my paycheck until Friday; text with me at 2 a.m. because nights are the worst; don't tell staff I missed my meeting. Respond to each with the prepared pattern: warmth, the line, the alternative — 'Here is what I can do.' The partner rates each response: was the line early, clear, and kind?

My three boundary sentences, word for word:

The alternative I offer with each line — "Here is what I can do:"

My takeaway

The one thing from this session I most need to remember — in my own words:

Homework — this week's application

☐ Write your three boundary sentences in your workbook, word for word. If the situation arises this week, use one; if it does not, tell the sentences to your accountability partner so they exist outside your own head.

Space to do the homework and note how it went:

An optional Scripture handout for this session is available from your facilitator on request.