

Small Group Discussion Notes

Pt 3 - COMMUNITY - Supportive Relationships

... The Church as a Community

Acts 2:42-47

When the early church began, it functioned as a community of Christ followers doing life together.

... Building Friendships

Close community doesn't just happen. It has to be cultivated and nurtured intentionally. Intentional community is a core responsibility of being an active member of a church family.

Notice that the first believers at the church in Jerusalem started spending time with each other – over meals and in their homes (see again **Acts 2:42-47**).

... WPCC Ministry Principle

- **Supportive Relationships**

A *'Programme shift'* from events to relationships, being a caring community.

John 13:34-35; Romans 12:10; Galatians 6:10; Philippians 2:3-4

... WPCC Core Values

- **Community**

We uphold the value and worth of all people and will maintain an environment of love, acceptance and forgiveness. **1 Peter 4:8; Ephesians 4:2-3**

... Belonging

We believe that life change happens best in small groups, through accountability, a sense of belonging and knowing that others care. **Hebrew 10:24-25; Ecclesiastes 4:12**

We want to be large enough to make a difference but small enough to really care. But how can we do this?

... Following the New Testament Church Model

The New Testament church grew very rapidly.

Acts 21:20

In 20-25 years the Jerusalem church had grown from about 120 people up to 100,000 people.

This rapid growth of the early church raises at least two questions;

1. Where did they put all those people?
2. How did they care for them?

The early Church grew larger and smaller at the same time.

Notice that there are two types of meetings.

1. They met in the *'Temple courts'* - a large group meeting.
2. And from *'house to house'* - a small group meeting.

Romans 16:5; Acts 2:46; 8:3; 16:40; 20:20; 1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15

... Building a Small Groups Culture

We gain a sense of belonging when we are a part of a small group.

... The Purpose of Life Groups

- **A Life Group is a CARE Group.**

'It is a place where Christians can gather together to care for one another through friendship, encouragement and practical expressions of love and kindness.'

- **A Life Group is a DISCIPLE-MAKING Group.**

'It is a place where Christians can grow together to become fervent followers of Jesus Christ through the process of discipline, teaching and mentoring.'

- **A Life Group is a MINISTRY Group.**

'It is a place where Christians can develop and use their God-given gifts and abilities to help others.'

A Life Group is an OUTREACH Group.

'It is a place where Christians can bring their friends, neighbours and relatives in order for them to experience the life that is in Jesus Christ.'

... Discussion Questions

1. What are some advantages of a small church? Can a large church produce this?
2. What are some reasons why some people are not that excited about the church getting bigger?
3. If there was ever persecution in our country and Christians could not meet in public places, how would the church survive? What would it look like?
4. Review the four purposes of a Life Group. Give your group a rating from 1 to 10 for each purpose. What are some things you could do to improve in your weakest area?
5. What are some of the reasons why some people choose to not become part of a Life Group? What are some ways that these 'barriers' or 'obstacles' could be overcome?
6. What are some ways we can make involvement in a Life Group more attractive to people? In other words, how can we highlight the benefits more effectively?