



Series: God's Forever Family

"Growing God's Family"

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"You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.'" Matthew 22:37-40

9 REASONS TO BE IN A SMALL GROUP

#1 BECAUSE _____ DEMONSTRATED IT

Mark 9:30-31 **"Leaving that region, they traveled through Galilee. Jesus didn't want anyone to know he was there, for he wanted to spend more time with his disciples and teach them."**

#2 BECAUSE THE APOSTLE _____ TAUGHT IT

2 Timothy 2:2 (NAS) **"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."**

#3 BECAUSE SPIRITUAL _____ ACCELERATES

Ephesians 4:16 **"He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love."**

#4 BECAUSE RELATIONAL _____ INCREASES

Matthew 12:46-49 **"As Jesus was speaking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. Someone told Jesus, 'Your mother and your brothers are outside, and they want to speak to you.' Jesus asked, 'Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?' Then he pointed to his disciples and said, 'Look, these are my mother and brothers.'"**

#5 BECAUSE EFFECTIVE _____ INTENSIFIES

James 5:16 **“The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.”**

#6 BECAUSE _____ ACCELERATES

“I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.” John 10:10

#7 BECAUSE REAL _____ CAN OPERATE

Galatians 6:2(NIV) **“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”**

#8 BECAUSE _____ BECOMES REAL

Romans 12:9 **“Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them.”**

#9 BECAUSE _____ SHOWS UP

Matthew 18:20(NKJV) **“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”**

HOST HOMES

Romans 12:13, 15&16 **“When God’s people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality...Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with each other.”**

SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Mark 10:43-45 **“Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be the slave of everyone else. For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”**

Life Group Homework

Getting Started

1. Tell about a group or community you belonged to as a child, teen or young adult. What were some of the things that made it a great place for you?
2. What insight, principle or observation from this Sunday's message did you find to be most helpful, eye-opening or troubling? Explain.

Digging Deeper

One of the greatest gifts Jesus left us with as He ascended into heaven was "community". Community is a concept that includes togetherness, oneness and shared purpose. It focuses on living the "good news" as a group, not as individuals.

For Paul the gospel bound men and women to one another as well as to God. Acceptance by Christ necessitated acceptance of those others accepted by Christ (Rom 15: 7). Union with the Spirit involved union with one another, for the Spirit is primarily shared, not individual experience (Eph 3: 5).

Community was and is kingdom living in the making. We are never closer to the heart of God than when we respond corporately to Him. When we, as a group, seek after His face, proclaim the gospel, or serve those in need we honor God and demonstrate the character of God in the truest sense. In community, the question "who is my neighbor?" becomes a fundamental question.

Read Acts 2: 42 - 47

3. What are the characteristics that made this community so extraordinary?

4. How did this community do each of the following?

- a. Express love for one another
- b. Express love for God
- c. Help one another grow spiritually
- d. Surrender their whole lives to God

5. Why don't we experience community as vibrant as this one?

Read Romans 12: 9 - 16

6. What does Paul say here about how to do "life together"? How would a community that practices this appeal to the world?

7. Verse 10 talks about honoring each other. How is this done today? Why is this important? What is accomplished?

Application

1. Why do we often put the urgent ahead of the important? God calls us to live in community but we often see it as a burden and not the gift it really is. Why?

2. What distinctively identifies the followers of Jesus is their treatment of one another. How does "doing life together" as a group point people to Jesus? How does this group cause people to look toward Jesus?

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