

What Every Christian Needs (Part 1)

Introduction:

1. Today, you may feel very alone. But God never intended for people to go at life alone. God said about Adam, *"It is not good that man should be alone..."*
Genesis 2:18
2. God intended for us to share our lives with others. I'm not talking about being married, but I am referring to what the Bible calls *"fellowship."*
 - The word *"fellowship"* means "partnership; participation."
 - As believers, we can get some very wrong ideas about the word *"fellowship."* Staying after church for refreshments, eating a doughnut, chit-chatting, small talk about sports, etc. This is not real fellowship.
3. True fellowship is when a group of people share life with one another. This is what God intends for every believer (1 John 1:3, 7). People that walk with Christ love each other. It is that simple! John 13:35
4. Every person needs to be connected with a small group of people whereby they can share life together. It is absolutely crucial and vital.
5. God has created us in Christ to be a part of a group wherein we can love, share, serve, and give to one another. Why is this so important? Why does the Bible put such a high premium on this thing called fellowship?
6. When you are in a small group, and you are experiencing life together:

First, you are being Christ-like.

1. When Jesus began His public ministry to Israel, do you know what He did first? He formed a small group. Matthew 4:18-22
 - Matthew 10:2-4 lists their names. There were 13 in the group, counting Jesus. They ate together, prayed together, served together, traveled together, learned together, etc.
2. From the very beginning, Jesus chose to establish and minister within a framework of interpersonal relationships.
 - Yes, Jesus ministered to large crowds. But He also met with small groups. Mark 2:14-15; Matthew 26:6
 - He spent the majority of His time with His small group of 12 men.
3. Jesus did not come to lead a political revolution, or work up the crowds into a frenzied mass. He came to build relationships. He knew that this is what it is all about.
 - Christ could have remained aloof from any relationships that entangled Him in human needs and suffering. But He chose to spend time with imperfect people, caring, healing, listening, forgiving, encouraging, teaching, etc.
 - Christ emphasized people, not programs. Because of this, He gave continuous time and attention to His small group, even after His resurrection. Luke 24:40-45; Acts 1:3

4. If Jesus' small group was a priority in His life, it needs to be a priority in your life.
5. If you want to be more like Christ, get involved in a small group. It is life-changing.

Second, you gain an extended family.

1. There are many of you like me. Your physical family is separated from you by distance. Or, maybe they are geographically close to you and you love them, but you really don't share a lot in common. Maybe you are a follower of Christ, and they are not.
2. Did you know that Jesus taught that there can be a group of fellow believers in your life that are closer to you than physical family?
 - Look at Matthew 12:46-50. Isn't this amazing?
 - God has designed the church to be a place where you literally can gain an extended family. 1 Timothy 5:1-2
 - I know many of you have experienced this, and it has revolutionized your life.
3. Typically, you don't find an extended family by sitting in a crowd of people.
 - **Illustration:** Imagine if there were 400 people in your immediate family. God didn't set it up for families to be that large. Most families are 12 or less. Even if there is more than that, they aren't all home at the same time.
 - God made it so that it is virtually physically impossible to have more than 15 people at a time in the home (9-month pregnancy). Why is this? Because family relationships don't blossom in a crowd. They blossom in a small group.
4. You may have attended church for quite a while, or maybe you even joined the church months ago and you are thinking, "I still don't feel like part of the church family."
 - My first question is, "Are you in a LIFE Group?"
5. Remember, true fellowship is sharing life together. Families share life together, and families come in small groups, not crowds.
6. You say, "But I don't **need** an extended spiritual family." Christ saw the need. Maybe the need is there, but you haven't seen it.
 - If disaster strikes tomorrow, you may wish you had a spiritual family to help you, pray with you, encourage you, and just **be** with you.

In Conclusion:

1. Do you want to be Christ-like? Would you like an extended spiritual family? The key is to connect yourself with a small group.
2. God is calling you to true fellowship with other believers – a group that you can share and experience life with.
3. Jesus knew that the greatest way for His life to have true impact was to be in a small group and to share life with 12 other guys. It revolutionized their lives, and it will revolutionize your life too.

Next Week – Part 2