

What Every Christian Needs (Part 2)

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 has created us in Christ to be a part of a group whereby 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?
3. When you are in a small group, and you are experiencing life together:

First, you are being Christ-like.

Second, you gain an extended family.

Third, you understand God’s Word better.

1. **Illustration:** A huge class in the chapel versus a small Greek class of 15 people in Bible College.
2. Why is this? It is because we tend to learn better in a small group environment. What if I were to ask you, “How many of you would like to understand the Bible?” Most of you would probably raise your hand. But did you know you would probably process and understand God’s Word in a small group setting better than you would in a big crowd like this? Why? Because we learn faster by asking questions.
 - Obviously, when I teach and preach to hundreds of people, that is not an environment that’s conducive to questions and answers. First, many of you would never ask a question in a crowd this size. Second, I could never to get to everybody.
 - If I had 10 of you in my office and we were going through biblical material, you would feel at ease to ask questions, and we could have some great discussion.
3. Learning happens best by discussing and instructing. Let me give you a Bible example of Jesus Christ and his small group of 12 disciples.
 - John 13:36-14:31 is a series of questions, answers, dialogue, and clarification.
 - This is only one example. For three and a half years this went on. It was constant. The disciples were connected in a small group with Christ, and they learned God’s Word.
 - This is why He told them when He went away, “The things I have taught you, you will teach others.” (Which, by the way, is strong proof that Paul’s gospel and doctrine was different than what the 12 had been taught. Otherwise there would have been no reason for Christ to personally appear to Paul by direct revelation. Paul’s message and apostleship was unique from that of the the twelve).

4. In a small group you have an opportunity to ask questions, get clarification, and really process what you have heard. Wrong thinking can also be corrected (John 9:2-3). Small groups help us to understand God's Word better because we learn faster and better by observing biblical teaching lived out in someone else's life.
 - Do you know how the disciples learned how to pray? Not by going to a weekend seminar on prayer. They watched Jesus pray. Luke 11:1
5. When you have a small group of 10 or 15 people that are sharing life together, you learn so much about God's Word just by watching and observing other Christians who love the Lord. You see biblical principles modeled before your very eyes. That's powerful!
 - As they say, "More is caught than taught."
 - **Illustration:** Aquila and Priscilla taught Apollos in Acts 18:24-26. How were they able to teach the Scriptures to this gifted and educated man? Paul had taught them personally when he lived in their home. They heard Paul and saw his teachings lived out firsthand. Philippians 4:9

Fourth, you have a support system through life's struggles.

1. Life has its ups and downs. Sometimes this old life can be devastating. In times like this, you need somebody. You need support. You need prayer and someone to care. Ecclesiastes 4:10
 - You can try to act tough and act like you don't need anybody, but that's exactly what it is – an act. Deep down, everybody wants to be loved and cared about, especially when life gets tough.
 - You may be here today, and you're going through a real struggle (divorce, death of a loved one, addiction, job loss, separation, single mom, etc.).
 - You need a support system, and the best place to find it is at church.
2. Let's go back to Jesus and His small group of 12 disciples.
 - They went through a lot of struggles, but the toughest was, without a doubt, when their small group leader (Jesus Christ) was cruelly crucified by an angry mob.
 - Their hearts were full of sorrow, they were confused, and they were afraid. (Are we next?)
 - But the good thing is that they had each other. John 20:19-21
 - In John 21:1-3, Jesus shows up and comforts and encourages them. They got through their struggle together and went on to great ministries.
 - **Example:** The apostle Paul had his small group. You can read about it at the end of almost all of his letters.
3. When you are connected to a small group of believers and you are sharing life together, it provides a support system through life's struggles.

Fifth, you receive the accountability that you need to grow.

1. God's plan is that every believer is to grow in his or her walk with Christ. 1 Peter 2:2; 2 Peter 3:18

- Peter was a guy who knew all about growth. He had grown from a foul-mouthed, ill-tempered fisherman to a preacher of God’s good news.
 - The key was that Peter was part of a small group, and he had accountability at key times in his life when he needed it.
2. This is a central issue that explains why so many well-meaning believers end up by the wayside. They quit church and go backward spiritually in their lives. Let me explain what happens:
 - You come to church and it excites you. You love the preaching and teaching. You want to come to church. You can’t wait for the next service.
 - Over time, things change. Maybe a couple of the messages don’t really hit home with you. Maybe you’re also going through some tough circumstances at work or at home.
 - That motivation to get up and come to church is fizzling. You miss a Sunday one month, then a couple of Sundays another month, until finally you rarely come to church.
 - Nobody calls you, and you say, “Nobody missed me. Nobody cares whether I go or not.” So you quit, and your life takes a spiritual nosedive.
 3. What you really needed was a small group. A group of people who know you by name. They have your phone number, and they truly care about you. They can call you if you start to waver, encourage you, and say, “Hang in there. Don’t quit.”
 4. Small groups are the Velcro of the church. They help you to be connected and help you to stick with the family.
 5. Let’s look at Mark 9:33-36 and notice the accountability.
 - We all need a few people who love us enough to tell us what we **need** to hear and not what we **want** to hear – people who have a close enough relationship with us to do that.

In Conclusion:

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate your Christian walk right now? I’m not asking where you were 10 years ago, or a month ago, but right now.
2. Many of you can take the next step by getting connected to a small group. Do you want to be Christ-like? Do you want to gain an extended family? Do you want to understand God’s Word better? Do you want a support system through life’s struggles? Do you want to really grow in your Christian walk?
3. If the answer is “yes,” then you need a small group. It is essential in your spiritual walk.