

BE A BRINGER

“40 One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus....”
John 1:40-42a

A bringer makes one touch each week by investing and inviting someone to Christ and church.

Name three people you will pray for their salvation this week:

PRAYER REQUESTS FOR THE WEEK

“Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you;....” I Samuel 12:23a

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I  MY
CHURCH

**GROWTH
GUIDE**

Handout: 09/02/18

Study: 09/09/18

We Love Our Groups

God himself is in a community of three persons in one—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who exist in perfect unity. So it is not surprising that from the beginning, God created us to be in community with one another. Genesis 2:18 states: "It is not good for man to be alone." This passage is often used in the context of marriage, but it also speaks to our fundamental need to connect with others in the human community. What is striking about this statement is that God makes it before the Fall. There's no sin yet and no disobedience; man is in perfect intimacy with God. And yet, God declares that man is alone and that it is not good.

When Jesus' ministry began, he called 12 disciples to be his primary relational and ministry community. Did Jesus need this motley crew to help him? Not really. But Jesus chose to love them, teach them, and pour himself into relationships with them, thereby creating the first "small group."

The apostles continued Jesus' model and formed a community of believers who loved God and loved one another. Despite incredible persecution and against all odds, this rag tag group of Jesus-followers launched small communities (i.e. church) that proclaimed the gospel and changed the world forever.

When we look at the early church we get a picture of small communities of people who followed Jesus together. The Book of Acts, especially Acts 2:42-47, gives us a great picture of the early church and the components of biblical community, which encompassed both the "temple courts" and "house to house."

These believers engaged in life together through teaching, fellowship, communion, prayer, miracles, radical generosity, and corporate worship. They spent time together eating, learning, celebrating, proclaiming the Good News, and supporting each other. In addition, the 50-plus "one another" verses in the New Testament flesh out other aspects of this community. For example, it was a place where people loved, forgave, served, bore burdens, encouraged, exhorted, prayed, equipped, spoke truth in love, confessed sins, and treated each other as precious members of one body.

God never intended for us to live the Christian life alone. How can we apply these "one another" references unless we are in intentional, close relationships with each other? God calls us to love, not in an abstract or superficial way, but in a deep, face to face, life-on-life, transformative way—which is difficult and inevitably messy.

In our modern culture, small groups are often viewed merely as a program or a fellowship ministry within the church. But for the New Testament church, it was a way of life, encompassing every area of their lives. Their relationships with one another were critical to their pursuit of Jesus, their growth in Christ, and their witness to the Good News. It would be impossible to experience biblical community apart from spiritually significant, intentional relationships with other believers. Relational structures like small groups, therefore, are an integral part of "being" the church and not just "doing" church.

KEY VERSE

Hebrews 10:24

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” NKJV

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday: Hebrews 10:23-25; Matthew 18:20

Introduction

1. Do you belong to a Growth Group? If so, what do you like about it? If you aren't a part of a Growth Group, what are some reasons why?
2. Why is it important to connect with other Christians on a regular basis?

Tuesday: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; John 13:34-35

Connect Relationally

3. What is the spiritual benefit to connecting to other Christians?
4. What are ways the Growth Groups help to connect people?

Wednesday: Psalm 119:66; Proverbs 1:7; Colossians 3:16

Share Your Knowledge

5. What spiritual truths have you learned from other believers?
6. How might God want to use you to teach others what He has taught you?

Thursday: II Corinthians 1:3-4; Psalm 71:15-18; Psalm 66:16

Share Your Experiences

7. Describe a time when someone shared their experiences with you and it helped you to grow.
8. Describe a time when sharing your experiences helped someone else.
9. How might God want to use your experiences to help others?

Friday: Galatians 6:2; II Corinthians 8:13-14

Share Your Problems

10. Describe a time when other believers helped you through a time of trouble.
11. Describe a time when you helped someone at our church through a difficult situation.
12. Think of some people in our church who need help. How can you help them?