

## Warming Up

Have you ever been a comfortable spectator, when the speaker or performer says, “Now, let’s get someone from the audience up here!” You look for the restroom exit, or check to see if there’s enough room to hide under the table. Share a time when this may have happened to you or someone at your table, or in your row, and how it made you feel. How did you handle it?

## Takeaway # 1 - No’s to Rows Only

When God said, “It is not good for man to be alone” in Genesis 2:18, He did not create a row or people to sit before Adam while he entertained them with stories about the creation. He created a person with whom Adam could converse and share the details of life. They would have much in common and have each other’s backs. It wasn’t an audience that God made to end man’s state of being alone, it was a personal relationship. While rows are Biblical at times and practical for teaching, are some modern churches missing the solution of encouraging personal relationships among the church family? Discuss.

Can a person be all alone in a room of 2,000 people? What are some reasons people prefer to attend services in rows, rather than in small interactive circles?

Pastor Bobby Sebastian implied that rows may be more comfortable for lost visitors because they are not required to interact, while circles are more palatable for saved people, especially those who are confident enough to openly share with others.

Name some ways that Life Church can break this pattern and attract shy or lost people to take a chance in a small group. Are there any good ideas other than to be personally invited by someone they trust?

Colonial British soldiers marched in rows, each man with only one person on each side. They were easily picked off. Covered wagon trains formed circles for safety against attack. Can either or both of these images be applied to the spiritual kingdom of today’s church?

Jesus spoke to large groups (rows), but He called together a small group (circle) to spread His ministry. Discuss why both methods are truly needed in a successful church.

Jesus made a great promise in Matt 18: 20, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” When you pray with your friends or family, or in a small group, do you ever express faith that Jesus is truly there with you?

How does knowing this strengthen or encourage your prayer? Discuss.

## Takeaway # 2 - Does the Circle Feel Like a Bullseye?

Perhaps the main reason people give for being shy about being part of a small group is the fear that they will have to talk or that they will say something that seems foolish.

Consider the next three scriptures, and answer the question of whether being afraid of being in a small group is a legitimate excuse for the Christian.

Jesus prayed to the Father, “I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made **perfect in one**, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have **loved them as You have loved Me.**” John 17:23

“There is **no fear** in love; but perfect love **casts out fear.**” 1 John 4:18

“For God has **not** given us a **spirit of fear**, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” 2 Timothy 1:7

If fear is not of God, why do we embrace it? How do we overcome it? How can you help someone else overcome it?

Pastor Bobby Sebastian explained that a Connect Group should consist of people who have something in common. For me, I’m retired, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a farmer, a resident of Overton County, a camping person, a fisherman, a small business owner, etc. Name a few things about yourself that would put you in any of several Connect Groups.

### **Takeaway # 3 - The Ministry Angle**

Getting together in a small group of like-minded people can be fun, and that’s good in itself; but, how powerful would it be for that group to get busy in the kingdom of God. Hebrews 10:24-25 reads, “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.” If you met regularly with a group of Christian friends, what kinds of “service” activities would you like to do together?

### **Conclusion**

Let’s gather in His name, stir up love and good works, and follow the pattern set before us in the scriptures. It is not good for any of us to remain isolated.

Start making plans to create or join one of the Connect Groups soon!