

The Biblical Basis for Small Group Ministry or Small Groups and Walking with God

A presentation by Brian Roe to Benton Street Baptist Church's Men's Ministry on 17/09/2022

Introduction:

1. All over the world churches have been developing small group ministries. Many wonderful things have been happening in these groups. But the question arises, "Is this just a western cultural fad or does this kind of ministry have a basis in the Scriptures?" It is this question that I have been pondering for over 40 years.
2. I have a deep passion to communicate only principles from the Word of God,
3. As we begin our study today it is important to distinguish between the "nature of the church" which we draw from the Scriptures and the "structures of the church" which is also influenced by our culture.
4. An important scripture passage: John 13:1-17 especially vv. 12 - 14, "12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet."

I. Three Biblical Descriptions of the Church

A. Fellowship: I John 1:1-7 especially vv. 6-7, "If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin."

B. A Gifted Community: I Corinthians 12:1-13 especially vv. 4-7 & 11, "There are different kinds of gifts, **but** the same Spirit. 5 There are different kinds of service, **but** the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, **but** the same God works all of them in all men. 7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.... 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines."

C. The Body of Christ: Romans 12:1-8 especially vv. 4&5, "Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." (See also Eph. 4:11-16)

II. One Another Commands for Every Believer:

1. Love one another: John 13:34 & 35
2. Encourage one another: Hebrews 2:13 & 10:24 & 25; Romans 1:11 & 12;
3. Teach one another - Romans 15:14
4. Prayer for one another - James 5:16
5. Serve one another - Galatians 5:13 & 14
6. Accept one another - Romans 15:7
7. Discipline one another: Hebrews 12:15; Galatians 6:1 & 2
8. Forgive one another - Ephesians 4:32 & Mt. 18:21-35
9. Build up one another - I Thessalonians 5:11
10. Submit to one another: Eph. 5:21

III. Descriptions of Early Church Gatherings:

A. Acts 2:42-47: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

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Note the devotion to fellowship as well as the early believers meeting in the temple as well as in homes.

B. 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15: "Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. ¹³ Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other. ¹⁴ And we urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak, be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else."

C. I Corinthians 14:26, "What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church."

D. Hebrews 10:24f., "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-- and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

IV. Significant Small Group Examples History:

A. John Wesley's Class Meetings: "...let us plainly and freely tell one another what God has done for our souls. To this end, you would do well, as others have done, to form yourselves into little companies... and meet once a week to tell each other what is in your hearts; that you may then also pray for and comfort each other as need shall require. None but those who have experienced it can tell the unspeakable advantages of such a union and communion of souls... None I think that truly loves his own soul and his brethren as himself, will be shy of opening his heart, in order to have their advice, reproof, admonition and prayers, as an occasions require. A sincere person will esteem it one of the greatest blessings." (from John Stott quoting George Whitfield in *One People*, IVP, p. 88.

B. Alcoholics Anonymous

C. Two-winged Church

D. Neil Anderson's follow-up to his "Seven Steps to Freedom"

Conclusion:

1. Small Group Ministry is an important aspect of BSBC's future plans as we see in the promotion of our Community Groups under the leadership of Julia Rogler.
2. Our Men's Ministry is making it an important aspect of ministry with **Every Man A Warrior** groups.
3. The **Experiencing Community** study is a useful 7 session for training small group ministry leaders as well for training how to participate in a biblical small group. In other words for it is useful and supports all types of small group ministries here at BSBC.