

SESSION # 1 Small Group Basics

By Kurt Johnson

1. Smithsonian
2. A Photograph of a Small Group
3. A Definition (by Kurt Johnson)
 - (a) “A small group is an intentional, face to face gathering of 3-12 people on a regular time schedule, with the common purpose of forming friendships, meeting needs of each other, growing spiritually, and helping others discover a relationship with Jesus.”
 - (b) “Belonging” is my 21st Century definition (by Kurt Johnson)

“A small group is a close-knit group of friends that doesn’t feel complete if someone in the group is missing. They truly become friends—friends who are there for each other whether they are sad, happy, discouraged, celebrating, or mourning. Friends who pray with you, challenge you, hold you accountable, laugh with you, and love you no matter what you do or where your past has taken you. Together, by God’s grace and power, they live out the phrase, “We wish to see Jesus” (John 12:21) in the way we treat each other.”

4. A Biblical Foundation
Acts 2:41-47, “Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2

Today

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Apostles Doctrine | _____ |
| 2. Fellowship | _____ |
| 3. Breaking Bread | _____ |
| 4. Prayers | _____ |
| 5. Provide for others ("had need") | _____ |
| 6. Gained favor with one another | _____ |

7. Added Daily _____

Notice a Biblical Principle about Church Life: Notice how the life of the church was centered in the small groups—fellowship (socials, friendship); meet needs (congregational care); gained trust in the community and with one another. The group members take care of each other and reach out to others!

Where did this happen?

H _____

T _____

Out of Acts 2:41-47 emerges our agenda . . .

Small Group Agenda—4 Vital Ingredients

1 Building Friendships (_____)

2 Getting to Know God (_____)

3 Talking to God About Life (_____)

4 Rallying Cry (_____/ministry event: WHAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER)

Your Turn!

1. Get into groups of three.
2. Choose a leader.
3. Share: name/currently live and where you lived when you were 12 years old & what you liked best about where you lived.

Ellen White & Early Adventists

A variety of methods for small groups

“The formation of *small companies* as a basis of Christian effort has been presented to me by One who cannot err. If there is a large number in the church, let the members be formed into *small companies*, to work not only for the *church members*, but for *unbelievers* also.” (*Evangelism*, 115).

Work for _____ & _____

- “To all who are working with Christ I would say, Wherever you can gain access to the people by the *fireside*, improve your opportunity. Take your *Bible*, and open before them its great truths. *Your success* will not depend so much upon your knowledge and accomplishments, as upon *your ability to find your way to the heart*. By being social and coming close to the people, you may turn the current of their thoughts more readily than by the most able discourse. The presentation of Christ in the *family*, by the *fireside*, and in *small gatherings* in *private homes*, is often more successful in winning souls to Jesus than are sermons delivered in the open air, to the moving throng, or even in halls or churches.” *Gospel Workers* 193.
- “But on such occasions as our annual camp meetings we must never lose sight of the opportunities afforded for teaching the believers how to do practical missionary work in the place where they may live. In many instances it would be well to set apart certain men to carry the burden of different lines of educational work at these meetings. Let some help the people to learn how *to give Bible readings* and to *conduct cottage meetings*. Let others bear the burden of teaching the people how to practice the principles of health and temperance, and how to give treatments to the sick. Still others may labor in the interests of our periodical and book work.” *9 Testimonies*, 82, 83.
 - Bible Readings.
 - Cottage Meetings.
 - Health principles and treatments for the sick.
 - Literature and book ministry
- “Let the teachers in our schools devote Sunday to missionary effort. Let them take the students with them to hold meetings for those who know not the truth. Sunday can be used for carrying forward various lines of work that will accomplish much for the Lord. On this day house-to-house work can be done. Open air meetings and *cottage meetings* can be held.” *Counsels To Parents and Teachers*, 551.
 - Hold meetings.
 - Use Sunday for “various lines of work”—such as,
 - House to house work.
 - Open air meetings.
 - Cottage meetings.
- “In the church there was a revival of the missionary spirit. An earnest desire to learn how to work for the Lord was shown. *Small companies* gathered for prayer and Bible study. All moved forward with harmonious action. Believers went to places where the people have no opportunity to hear the Word of God and gathered the children for Sabbath School. Efforts were made to help isolated families. Plans were laid for these families to *meet with other families for Bible study*. Thus the way was opened for the light to shine forth from the word of God.” *Indiana Reporter*, February 25, 1903, “*A Call to All Our People*.”
 - Prayer and Bible study
 - Branch Sabbath Schools for children

- Home group Bible studies
- "In visions of the night, representations passed before me of a great reformatory movement among God's people. Many were praising God. The sick were healed, and other miracles were wrought. A spirit of intercession was seen, even as was manifested before the great Day of Pentecost. *Hundreds and thousands* were seen *visiting families and opening before them the Word of God*. Hearts were convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit, and a spirit of genuine conversion was manifest. On every side doors were thrown open to the proclamation of the truth. The world seemed to be lightened with the heavenly influence. Great blessings were received by the true and humble people of God. I heard voices of thanksgiving and praise, and there seemed to be a reformation such as we witnessed in 1844." 9 *Testimonies, 126*.

SUMMARY

Ellen White uses terms such as *cottage meeting*, *small companies*, *little companies*, and *small gatherings* to refer to what we call *small groups*. Consider the elements of her counsel:

1. God told her that churches should have small group ministries.
2. Small groups commonly meet in "private houses."
3. Meet by the "fireside."
4. Meet in the evening or morning, whichever is convenient for one's schedule.
5. The purpose of the meeting is to minister to baptized "church members;" "for winning souls to Jesus;" to minister to "unbelievers."
6. What is done in the home? (a) "open your Bibles," "study the Bible," "present Christ," "Bible Readings;" (b) "pray;" (c) "be social," "come close to the people," "find your way to the heart;" (d) "share testimonies."

Ellen White's comments concerning small group life reflect very closely the elements of Acts 2:42-47: doctrinal study, fellowship, prayer, food, meets needs, sharing the message about Jesus & Scripture, and developing friendships.

1-17-22