

Principles for Effective and Explosive Small Groups

By

Pastor Chris Holland, *DMin.*



History of Small Groups



The Trinity



From the very beginning, God has existed in what scholars call the “triune community.”

Throughout time we see the interaction between God the Father, who is the Sustainer of all things and from where we derive our purpose; God the Son, who is the One and Only Redeemer; and God the Holy Spirit,



the One who comforts, instructs and sanctifies.

Their Oneness of deity and yet plurality of persons demonstrates to us the importance, since the beginning of time, of small groups.



Noah



For seven days after Noah and his family entered the ark, there appeared no sign of the coming storm. During this period their faith was tested.

Patriarchs and Prophets, page 98



Moses



Exodus 18:17-27



Daniel



Daniel 1:11-15



Daniel 2:17-19



Nehemiah



Nehemiah 3



Jesus



Mark 3:13-19



Mark 6:7, 30



Luke 10:1



The Early Church



Acts 2:42-47

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 2:42-47



Acts 4:32-35

Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor



Acts 4:32-35

was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.



Martin Luther



One of the central goals of the Reformation was to bring the Scriptures to the common person, the "priesthood of believers." First and foremost were small groups of lay people who met for prayer and the study of Scripture. The Bible was read with a new sense of anticipation regarding what might be possible as a



consequence of acting in faith. For Luther, faith was to be nourished and strengthened through reflection and meditation on God's Word. Consequently, small groups were formed to help people integrate their belief and behavior, their faith and their work.

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html?paging=off>



John Calvin



the French Reformer who ultimately spent most of his preaching, teaching, and writing years in Switzerland, attempted to evangelize his native France through the venue of small groups. These were strategic small groups of laity who met regularly for prayer and the study of Scripture. Although considered a bit more radical,



Calvin supported the Reformed focus of "Scripture Alone" for justification. His contribution *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was one of the most important writings of the 16th century. Calvin claimed his reason for writing this work was to allow his readers to have



easy access to the Word of God and to progress in it without stumbling.

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html?paging=off>



John Wesley



John and his brother Charles formed a small group to aid one another in their studies, to read helpful books, and to participate in frequent communion. This was known as the Holy Club. And because of its disciplined ways, it was given the name Methodist. When the members of this group experienced significant



life-change, the small-group format eventually became the strategic plan for spiritual growth within the Wesleyan movement.

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html?paging=off>



At the heart of John Wesley's discipleship and renewal system were "class meetings." These meetings proved to be an excellent environment for life transformation, and they became a pivotal element of the Methodist movement, blending belief and behavior for the integrity of their faith. The class meeting



challenged the small group with the key principles of New Testament Christianity: personal growth, accountability, and spiritual stewardship, doing so by "bearing one another's burdens" and "speaking the truth in love." Wesley made sure every believer was engaged in a small group, and through this



powerful movement, the English society was largely transformed. So long as it prospered, the class meeting was the institution that did the most to guarantee that church membership was not merely a nominal affiliation.

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html?paging=off>



The Puritans



Important to the theological education and the commitment to spiritual growth, the Puritans (both English and American) called their small groups "private meetings." They were most effective for developing an individual's spirituality. Meeting at least weekly,



there were several reasons for these gatherings:

1. In such a small group, Christians could more easily express "love for one another"
2. As a community of prayer, the group could exercise "earnest prayer for the Church," of which it was a part



3. By "timely exhortation" members could apply the Gospel to others in a direct way
4. The groups gave members the opportunity to engage in "instructing and teaching one another; as occasion serves"
5. They could be a means of God's grace "in comforting those that be sad" or in mourning



6. They were a forum in which members, even those "fallen with a spirit of meekness," could learn to express their faith and the gifts of the Spirit more boldly.

<https://www.smallgroups.com/articles/2011/brief-history-of-small-groups-part-2.html?paging=off>



God's Last day Remnant people



“The formation of small companies [small groups] 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.



If in one place there are only two or three who know the truth, let them form themselves into a band of workers. Let them keep their bond of union unbroken, pressing together in love and unity, encouraging one another to advance, each gaining courage and strength from the assistance of the others.

7T 21-22



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“...Christ worked for us when we were unbelievers. Should we not labor for our friends and neighbors who do not believe? Christ expects you to become acquainted with the spiritual needs of these souls, and to work for them in meekness and lowliness of heart. . . .



At this time the followers of Christ should bring a strong counter-influence to meet the influence of evil.”

(Review & Harold, January 6, 1910 par. 8).



In our churches let companies be formed for service. In the Lord's work there are to be no idlers. Let different ones unite in labor as fishers of men.

[Evangelism \(p. 115\). Review and Herald Publishing Association.](#)



Keys for Successful Small Groups



1. Keep the Group Small



2. Stay Committed



3. Keep Your Purpose Clear



4. All Members have a
Common Bond, Interest and
Purpose



5. Keep the Group Consistent



6. Confidentiality is Key



7. Choose a specific
topic/subject/book



8. Set a specified period of time



9. Use a Simple Format



10. Meet in a home



11. Keep Meeting Times Regular



12. Do not allow the small
group to become a
substitute for church



13. Mentor/Disciple future leaders



14. Be Prepared



Resources and Curriculum



Unsealing Daniel's Mysteries



Search for Certainty



Revelation of Hope



Natural Lifestyle Cooking



Ancient Discoveries



Discoveries in Revelation



Adventist Review Studies



Thunder in the Holy Land

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Land

