

# Small Groups

By Milton Adams



Where Church Family Grows Deeper

Last summer I began landscaping our yard with railroad ties. Having never considered myself sedentary, I was painfully surprised to identify muscles I had long neglected. I was equally surprised at how quickly the pain subsided with continued work.

I've had a similar experience with my spiritual musculature. Each weekend I spend time studying and worshiping with like believers,

exercising one group of spiritual muscles. Each day I spend alone time with God, exercising another set of muscles. I do not consider myself spiritually sedentary. However, I've discovered yet another set of muscles that easily atrophies from disuse. These are spiritual muscles optimally exercised in close, ongoing relationship with fellow Christians; there are Christian skills we do not learn alone nor refine in a crowd.

It was in a weekly small group that I found the exercise my muscles needed. You can be sure that there was discomfort at first, but in time, a steady strengthening. In my current pastorate, small groups exist for one reason—to “go and make disciples.” We believe that every Christian is a minister who has been given the



privilege of making disciples. We assume that every group participant is a potential leader. Therefore, leadership development is a high priority. And we assume that small groups are a way of life, not an additional church program.

One could summarize our small groups in two words: relationships and evangelism. You might say they are two sides of the same coin, but each plays an important role in making dis-



you. Where fellow believers will ask you what your next step is in a life of obedience and will stand by you as you take it. Imagine giving and receiving the awesome gift of intercessory prayer. Where you can frequently share your testimony of God's work in your life and hear the same from others. Where your spiritual gifts are validated. Where you can invite friends to meet your Friend Jesus.



ciples. One strong evidence (not the only evidence) of a maturing disciple is that he or she co-lead a group. The fruit of an apple tree is not just an apple, but also a new apple tree. In fact, we've called our groups Growth Groups. We want people to know right up front that spiritual fruit (apples) and numerical fruit (new apple trees) are the norm for Christian community.

Small groups provide valuable encouragement and resources: Imagine being part of a small group where you belong; a place where you are encouraged and can be an encouragement to others. Where Christians who desire your eternal good will press God's Word into your life and seek the same accountability from

The book of Acts describes this kind of Christian relationship as the muscle and sinew of the New Testament Church. We can have the same sense of Christian unity and togetherness as the church described in Acts, if we're willing to make it a way of life! Milton Adams is currently pastoring in Oregon and is available for training seminars. Contact: [miltonadams@actionnet.net](mailto:miltonadams@actionnet.net)



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