

Ministry Groups

(Part 4) – Encouraging and equipping each other for ministry (various texts)

10-25-09

Introduction

Last ministry group sermon / Last week to sign-up (Thursday)

First two weeks – *The WHY of ministry groups*

- Why focus on ministry to others when we know everyone is asking, “What’s in it for me?”
- 3 Reasons
 - 1) God wants us to raise up God-centered, others-focused Christians, not self-centered, self-focused Christians. (Mt. 22:37-40)
 - 2) In God’s economy, focusing on ministering to others is not only what’s best for God and others, it’s what’s best for us as well. (Mark 10:42-45)
 - 3) Ministering to others is key to growing in Christ yourself.

Last week – *The WHAT of ministry groups*

- Ministry groups are small groups of 6 to 12 adults designed to *encourage and equip you to minister at home, at church, and out in the community* and thereby advance God’s Kingdom by growing in Christ yourself and by helping others to do the same.
- God has called ALL Christians to minister at...
 - Home - Feed ourselves, love our spouse, disciple our kids, care for our extended family
 - Church (believers) – Be together, learn together, pray together, protect each other, and serve one another

- Out in the community (unbelievers) – DO good works and SHARE our faith
- This is a high and potentially overwhelming calling that we can only fulfill with the help of God and each other. Ministry groups are designed to encourage and equip you to fulfill this calling.

This week – *The HOW of ministry groups*

- How will joining a ministry group help you fulfill God’s call to minister at home, at church, and out in the community and thereby grow in Christ yourself and help others to do the same?
- By providing...
 - 1) Opportunity
 - 2) Equipping
 - 3) Encouragement
 - 4) Accountability
 - 5) Prayer

Body

I. By providing opportunity

- a. Though opportunities to minister at home abound, sometimes we fail to seize them because we’re too busy.
 - i. Joining a MG will put ministry at home on the calendar.
 1. MG meeting every other week
 2. Off-week ministry to care group or community
 3. Should encourage you to be more intentional at home on the other days as well
- b. Though opportunities to minister at church abound, sometimes we don’t know people well enough to take them.
 - i. Sunday Mornings a good place to start, BUT...
 - ii. MG
 - iii. Care Group

- c. Though opportunities to minister out in the community abound, sometimes we need a little extra push or someone to jump in with us.
 - i. It is HARD to exercise regularly
 - 1. It helps some to have people remind us of the importance of exercise.
 - 2. It helps even more to have someone ask us regularly if we're exercising.
 - 3. It helps the most if someone gets up early and exercises with us.
 - ii. It is HARD to share your faith with those who don't believe

II. By providing equipping

- a. God equips us for ministry and growth in Christ by getting into His Word together
 - i. **Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)**
 - ¹¹ It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers,
 - ¹² to prepare God's people (to equip the saints) for works of service (for ministry), so that the body of Christ may be built up
 - ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
 - ¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.
 - ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.
 - ¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.
- b. MG will get into God's Word together through
 - i. the study (Cross Centered Life)
 - ii. applying God's Word to real life situations

- c. We hope this digging into, discussion of, and application of God's Word won't be limited to once every other week.

III. By providing encouragement

- a. It's encouraging to be able to share with people who care
- b. It's very encouraging to hear of other people's successes
 - i. That's why we do praise and prayer
 - ii. Ex. "Everything is going super! I can't remember the last time I yelled at my kids."
- c. But sometimes it's EVEN MORE encouraging to hear of other people's failures
 - i. Ex. "I've yelled at my kids every day for the past two weeks."
 - ii. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)**
¹³No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

IV. By providing accountability

- a. Already touched on accountability with the exercise/outreach
 - i. It will help some to have someone who cares about us regularly reminding us that we're not supposed to yell at our kids, especially if they gently back their reminder up with Scripture, in a loving and non-condemning way.
 - 1. I know you get super frustrated with the kids. I've been there myself a thousand times. But we have to remember that the Bible says...
 - 2. **Psalms 4:4 (NIV)**
⁴In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent. Selah

3. **James 1:19-20 (NIV)**

¹⁹...be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry,
²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires.

ii. It will help even more to have someone who cares about us regularly asking IF we've yelled at our kids, and then offering to pray for us.

1. How's the yelling been going lately? How can I pray for you about this?

iii. It will help most of all if someone who cares about us will humbly admit that they are struggling with yelling at their kids too, and then come up with a plan that we can execute together to help us other overcome it.

1. Here's what we're going to do. For the next two weeks we will...

- a. Pray for each other's yelling every morning.
- b. Call each other for just 5 minutes every evening after the kids are down to see how we did and to know how to pray the next morning.
- c. If we make it two weeks, we'll take a trip to Hawaii together the third week without the kids ☺.

V. **By providing prayer**

a. Sometimes we pay lip service to the importance of prayer. But if we believe what Jesus said, we can't.

i. **John 15:5 (NIV)**

⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; *apart from me you can do nothing.*

- b. Able to have people pray *specifically and regularly* for you and your family
 - i. Specifically because you'll be sharing openly
 - ii. Regularly because...
 - 1. They care
 - 2. Praying specifically helps identify answers to prayer which motivates further prayer
 - a. Weller's example
 - i. No scary stuff
 - ii. Come to know Christ
 - iii. We've been praying ever since!
- c. Able to pray *specifically* for others
 - i. MG
 - ii. Care group
 - iii. Community

Conclusion

We have super high expectation for these ministry groups and you should to, but *be patient*. It's going to take time to get where we want to go.

Ex. Rockhill

Two questions some of you might be asking?

- 1) What if I'm not a believer yet? Can I still join?
 - a. ABSOLUTELY!
 - b. We will respect you and meet you right where you're at.
 - c. Small groups are an excellent setting to be a fly on the wall and or and get your questions answered
 - i. My early small group experience
- 2) What if I'm not ready to join?
 - a. Don't feel bad AT ALL, I know it's a BIG step
 - b. You've still grow and connect through: Sunday mornings, your care group, ministries that are birthed out of the ministry

groups, all church events, and informal relationships you establish within the church

- c. If you change your mind let us know. We are ready to add people to care groups and/or start new ones as the need arises.