

Intro: Monday night, small group, discipleship: Meets in conference room, slammed, so I went to eat...back to work! 9:30 or so...group stops to say bye..."Go home..." No, I have WORK to do... All razzing me, giving me grief One of my small group members says, "Pastor, I think you are living in an upside down world!" Computer off!

In the Middle of our Series on Living Up In A Down World, and we are focused on the Church Part: Getting it Right Today I want to talk with you about the second part of Church that we believe is absolutely essential at RTBC

Gathering in A Group: We believe two things:

1. Absolutely biblical: (Jesus had a small group! The 12)

2. Absolutely essential: (I don't believe ANY of us can grow into the kind of Christians we all want to be..W/O

We NEED to be in a small group! 3 things happen in a small group that don't happen anywhere else in Christian life

3 Benefits of Small Group

1 Cor 12:12-27 Pg 813

1. Groups Offer Us A Place Of Authentic Spiritual Connection.

1 Cor 12:12-20

- We are part of the body of Christ (Don't always FEEL that way in Church!) Come, Listen, Leave Church is MORE! So much more...and a LOT of that more is found in a small Group (Content, Care, Connection)
- Not just physical connection, or emotional connection, or relational connection
- There is a true SPIRITUAL CONNECTION Vs 13
~We were all given the same Spirit to drink
~We were all "baptized" by one Spirit into one body
(Explain: Water vs Spirit baptism)
Titus 3:5-6 Rom 8:9
- Though we are different we all belong Vs 14-20
~We all belong 15-16 *integrally connected (of) form completing part*
~We all are placed by God! 18 God knows what we need...others need!

Illus: We can have that in here...in large worship service, but it isn't the same....at all Jesus shows us that the last couple of days on Earth (Upper Room Luke 22:15)

When you find the right group, you find a place and a people where you are spiritually connected Why? Because in a group you find kindred spirits.

When you find a connection where you are spiritually linked, it is amazing! (Say hard things...OK!)

2. Groups Give Us A Place To Care and Be Cared For By Others.

1 Cor 12:21-26

- **Need:** Everyone Is Needed *To be necessary; to offer what is required or useful (Mic Button!, Lights)*
- **Value:** Everyone is important Listeners for AWANA, Teachers for Kidz Central, VBS Video!
~weak *w/o strength, w/o health, w/o ability*
~honorable *to be despised; looked down upon; dishonored*
~Unpresentable *Inelegant; Shapeless: Unheard of in Greek and Roman world*
- **Care:** Everyone is cared for: **Concern:** *To be anxious about, or to be thoughtful of*
Illus: Cherished Members: Ladies prepared food, served food, cleaned up...Amazing Blessing to family Hadn't been able to attend for 3 yrs or more; Visited, Prayed, Read, It's hard for me to know if you aren't here...Not in a group....shows up!
- **Connection:** Everyone shares Suffers; Honored; Rejoices

Illus: Do you have someone in your life that truly "cares" for you? Anxious for your wellbeing, Notices if you are here or not? , Calles, reaches out Small Groups do that for one another: PRAY for; Comfort; Encourage, Challenge, Walk with I NEEDED someone to tell me, "Hey...you aren't practicing what you preach!" Wasn't ugly...Care! Past week, with 2 funerals, I saw the true care going out from the body: I received the thankful emails, calls, cards

3. Groups Give Us A Place To Contribute To Others Spiritually.

1 Cor 12:27-31

- One Body Church, body of Christ
- Many Parts People...you and I
- God has "appointed" you to a place! *Lit = to place in the exact right position!*
~Here, hard to contribute, But in Small Group...Fantastic!
~You can hear and be heard, care and be cared for, Serve and Be Served
- You have something Unique and Indispensable to contribute to the Body.
~Everyone has a different gift
~God chooses what you have
~No one is uniquely configured like you! (If you are here, then God has you HERE for a reason)
~No one else brings to the table what YOU bring...and if you don't bring it...WE MISS IT! HURTS!

Illus: I talk with people all the time who feel differently.

~ I don't have a gift:

~I don't have anything thing to offer

~I'm too young in my faith:

~I'm too busy:

Someone is confused...you or God!

God doesn't make any Junk (Dick Drehmer)

Best lessons I ever learned on Communion (Saftey net)

Everyone has the same 24 hours!

Listen, none of those things are true!

REMEMBER THIS...When Jesus faced the **MOST DIFFICULT** times of His earthly

He wanted to **BE WITH** His Group....He **NEEDED** to be with His group....

Luke: Upper Room in fellowship

Matt Garden in prayer

CONCL:

Find a group!

They are all different, and mix different elements of essential ingredients

Content, Care, Service, Prayer,

- Content (ABS: Other stuff; Wed Nite w me)
- Care: (Men's; Women's,
- Service: (Ministry Teams, Kids Central, AWANA, Youth, Many, many others)
- Prayer:

Find one!

Groups.rtbc.org

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