

Small Groups in the Bible

"Of all the potential ministry formats available to the local church, small groups have the greatest biblical support." (How to Lead Small Groups, Neal McBride, p. 13)

1. The Organization of Israel

Group involvement in a community of faith was an essential part of Israelite life. A relationship with God, according to the Bible, always includes a relationship with others.

Fill in the blanks according to the type of relationship identified in the Scripture passage:

_____ -- Exodus 12:3; Lev. 16:6

_____ -- Numbers 2

_____ -- Numbers 4:2

_____ -- Numbers 3:18-20

_____ -- Deuteronomy 6:4-6

The entire community of Israel was dependent upon this arrangement for all legal, religious, and social divisions. Devotion to God was a community-based effort.

2. Jesus as a Small Group Leader

- One paradigm for understanding Jesus' ministry is a balance between large & small group ministry. "As a small group leader, you are involved in a form of leadership in which our Lord and Savior also participated. You are walking in His footsteps. So, increasing your knowledge and understanding of small group leadership is essential. The heart of what you need to know about Jesus as a small group leader can be summarized in seven key statements." (Neal McBride, How to Lead Small Groups, pp. 15-16)

- 1) Jesus began His earthly ministry by establishing His 'small group', the disciples.
- 2) Jesus was actively involved in both large & small group ministry.
- 3) Jesus' ministry to large groups was preceded by and proceeded out of His small group context.
- 4) Jesus spent the majority of His time with His small group.
- 5) Relationships, not organizations, were central to His method.
- 6) Jesus used the small group context to teach and model spiritual knowledge, attitudes and behavior.
- 7) The small group was Jesus' method of leadership training.
(Neal McBride)

3. The Jethro Principle - Exodus 18:17-23

The Jethro Principle illustrates that small group shepherding care was at the very heart of Israelite life for the 40 years of wilderness wanderings, and no doubt, well after that.

4. Practicing Pastoral Care in Small Groups - John 13:34-35

"34 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

5. The One Another's of Scripture

"Be devoted... and give preference to one another." (Rom. 12:10)

"Accept one another" (Rom. 15:7)

"Care for one another" (1 Cor. 12:25)

"Bear one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2)

"Forgiving each other" (Eph. 4:32)

"Encourage ... and build up one another" (1 Thess. 5:11)

"Stimulate one another to love and good deeds" (Heb. 10:24)

"Confess your sins to... and pray for one another." (James 5:16)

"Serving one another" (1 Peter 4:10)

"Love one another" (John 13:34,35; 15:12,17; Rom. 13:8; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 4:8; 1 John 1:23; 4:7,11,12; 2John 5)



Brainstorm: What would each of these practically look like in context of a small group?

Resources; The Master Plan of Evangelism, Robert E. Coleman