

Beyond Thursday: Practical Tips for Provoking Weeklong Conversations

By Ryan Brymer

Let's face it. Most of us aren't that good at connecting. In many cases, groups that hold "community" as a central tenet have devolved into simply being a group of people who meet together on Thursday night. But, hey, life is busy. For some folks, they have a hard enough time keeping up with their own families, much less the people in their small groups.

It's not my goal to teach you how to reorder your group members lives so as to increase connection – that would take a whole book. Rather, I plan to offer you a few very practical tips for provoking weeklong conversations in hopes that they might deepen your individual connections. Every group has its own dynamic, so I'll tailor my approach to several different types.

The Outgoing Group

Is your group the one that spends the whole time talking and can barely squeeze in the planned lesson? You might think that these folks can't survive if they're not connected and living in community. Unfortunately, conversation doesn't always mean connection. You know as well as I do that you can have a great conversation on Thursday night and totally forget about the other person's life until you cross paths again on Sunday morning.

If this is your group, here's an idea for maintaining weeklong connections: Carry a notepad/journal with you to group. Whenever you hear something that another person has going on that is significant that week, jot yourself a reminder. Then, take 5-10 minutes each day throughout the week and send each person a note, specific to what they have going on. A great way to do this might be to write on their Facebook "wall" so that their friends and everyone else in the group can be reminded that each of you have a life beyond Thursday.

The Studious Group

This group stands in stark contrast to the Outgoing Group. These group members dispense with conversation as quickly as possible so they can dig deep into whatever they have been studying throughout the week. While great personal connections can happen in this forum, these guys may find it even more difficult to engage throughout the week.

If this is your group, think about putting together some study/reflection questions that you can email out to your group. Encourage them to send their answers back to you or to someone else in the group. If you want to take this a step

further, set up an online discussion board or forum so that these great conversations don't have to end when 9:00 pm rolls around.

The Disconnected Group

Unfortunately, there are a lot of groups made of people who just don't have any connection to each other, to the larger church, and sometimes to anyone at all. These folks typically offer little to group conversation whether on or off topic. Sometimes, as a leader, you don't even know why anyone comes when they seem so distracted or disinterested. However, this is often their form of reaching out for community. You just have to be careful about how you reach back, so that you don't scare them away.

If this is your group, do your best to get at least a cell phone number from everyone in the group. Then, when you get a free moment between meetings, at lunch, while waiting for your spouse to get ready, etc., drop someone a text message just to let them know you are praying for them (and actually DO IT), or simply wish them a good week. If someone had a specific prayer request, try to remember it in your message. Texting is a great way to send a message without expecting a response. Your message might make someone's day, and you never know, they may just write back.

Bonus Tips

This has not been intended as an exhaustive list of ideas. Hopefully, it will just get your creativity flowing to discover something that is perfectly suited for your group. Use the tools that you have on hand and see what can come of it. I have a friend (a web-designer) who set up a website for his group where they could access study materials and discussion questions. I used a service called Ning (<http://ning.com>) to set up a mini-social network for a book discussion group that I started.

Having trouble remembering to follow up with people? Set up alarms on your cell phone: "8:00 am, Have you called Steve yet?" Google Calendar (<http://google.com/calendar>) will even send you text messages or email reminders of events.

Developing individual relationships can be a slow-going, difficult process. Creating a deeply connected group dynamic is an art form. But if we believe in community (the way we say that we do) then we must do the hard work of making it happen.

LIFE GROUP PRAYER AND PRAISE

- Praise to the Father! Our landlord finally is getting some of the needed things done, all while we are at camp! ~ **Linda Royer**
- **Candi Shively** asks that we pray for her family.
- **Dave Kerr & family** needs prayer, Dave is a co-worker and employee and is in the hospital with a torn artery that is causing back problems. Pray for healing and God's peace. ~**Marc Owenby**
- Please pray for **Ruth LeMaster**, she needs a used car.
- Pray for my brother **Marshall** who had open lung surgery on Tuesday July 14th pray for his doctors as well.~ **Rose Toscano**
- Prayer for **Midge Ellis's family** that the Lord will show them what needs to be done and that he will watch over **Aiden** and protect him.
- Prayer request for **Karen Erickson's father Lloyd Johnson**. He is undergoing chemotherapy treatment and his next one will be very strong. Pray for good results so treatment will be less intense and for healing.
- Prayer for my nephew **Aaron Chmielewski** as he joins the Marines like his brother. **Joann**



Pray for our military

- *Jonathan Michaels Estrella—son of Sharon Boswell.*
- *Jason Bjazevich—Megan Owenby's husband—Army Special Forces— Stationed at Fort Lewis.*
- *Joel Ellis—son of John & Midge —Serving in Iraq.*
- *Scott Harpell—son of Brian & Lynne—Stationed at Fort Bragg.*
- *Aaron Weston—nephew of Ken and Kathy—Stationed in San Diego.*
- *Eric Schmidt — son of Gene and Pat Schmidt — Camp Fallujah, Iraq.*
- *Benjamin Lagonia—dear friend of the Naylor family—stationed in Manitoba.*
- *Elijah Austin —Ashley Naylor's husband—a Marine— Stationed at 29 Palms in California.*
- *David Coyle—son of Karen Mark—residing in Seattle, member of the National Guard.*
- *Adam Flynn—a young Marine safely home and out of military*
- *Brett Love—grandson of Wilma—Army National Guard-Serving second tour in Iraq.*
- *Robin Swartz - Serving in the military - currently home in Everett.*
- *Christian Chmielewski—nephew of JoAnn Couturie' - in the Marines.*
- *ENS Andrew E. Timpner (fiancé to Christin Suthard) on deployment with USS Momsen.*
- *Devin Abbitt—nephew of Paul Abbitt - Marine, stateside.*
- *Doug Baer—a teacher at Kamiak HS heading to Iraq in the Army Reserves—thru Sept. 09.*
- *Duane Neyens—brother to Kathy Chapman—Nat. Grd. Afghanistan*
- *Philip Ankney-LCPL Afghanistan Cousin of MaryAnn Peterson*
- *Jeffrey Lillard—son of Barbara Lillard — Srg. In Army, Stationed in Afghanistan.*

LIFE GROUP HAPPENINGS

All in the Family

by Florence Miller

Welcome back to our friendly, accommodating Sheri from her vacation. She says "We had a wonderful time fishing with family and friends, caught lots of fish right off the dock (from the boat too). The most spectacular view was from the deck of our cabin (180'), the weather was beautiful and we saw lots of eagles, ospreys, loons, ducks and deer. We finished painting my kitchen and the patio bricks got laid, all before I fell on Thursday afternoon and broke my wrist. I now have a splint and am typing very slowly. Praise God it doesn't hurt."

Lynn and Brian Harpell are all smiles as son Scott announces his engagement to Angela Dexter. The Harpells will be adding two new members to their family. Congratulations!

It was very apparent on Sunday that around 200 of our church family had fled to Family Camp at Ross Point, Idaho. So many vacant chairs or pews. The news via Facebook is that they are having a great time. Wonder if their weather is any hotter than ours?!



Elizabeth

We announced last week the birth of two babies, we now add pictures to the announcements. Clara Camile with her grandmother Debbie Beneditto and Elizabeth Wright daughter of Brandon and Amy. Both babies are doing well. Aren't they beautiful? !



Clara Camile



Come join us as we cheer on the Everett Aqua Sox baseball team on Wednesday Aug 5th at 7 pm. This event is designed for the whole family. Sign up for your tickets Now!

**Place your orders now for
fruits & veggies**

For prices and orders
please Contact

Ron Newman

425-397-0676



LIFE GROUP CONTRIBUTING OPPORTUNITIES

Happy Birthday

A Study of PSALM 119— *“Discovering and Using God’s Treasures”* Summer Bible study started Wednesday, July 1st at 12:00 pm in the Pacific Room. Dr. Fred Prinzing will be teaching a 12 week Bible Study on Psalm 119 on Wednesdays from noon until 1 pm. This Bible Study is open to people from both the church and community.

July 29th	Bill Philips Sr.
July 30th	Andrew Olson
August 1st	Sue Paylor
August 2nd	Bernice Willadsen, Barbara Kunkel
August 3rd	Terry Brundage
August 4th	Eleanor Harvey

Next Sunday, August 9, at the 9:00 hour, Gama Canul and his family from Merida, Mexico will be visiting with us. Refreshments will be served and you’ll hear an interesting presentation from Gama and our Merida Youth Team who have just returned from serving with him in the Yucatan. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend - small groups, too. Come to the social hall downstairs to hear about the work being done in Mexico and some of the exciting stories our teens have to tell.

Update July 26, 2009

Adult attendance: 183 Children: 9 am: 9/7 10:30 am: 13/8
Youth Small Group: Middle School No Class
High School No Class

USHER CAPTAIN 2009:

July—Pete Sontra
Luckey Elkins
August—Ron & Kay Olson
Craig Reisen

COFFEE HOUR 2009

August 2
Jesse Atchinson
College & Career
August 9
John Mullen
Life Group
August 16
Laura Oversvee
Women of Purpose
August 23
Kay Olson
Home Fellowship



New Wednesday Night “We Pray Group”

Lead by Pastor Allan Love
and Team

Meets in the
FBC-Community Center
(Room 152)
Wednesdays

6:30-8:00 p.m.

No childcare available.