

# CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY: THE GOAL OR STARTING POINT?

# CareConnection

We all know that *community* is central to Christianity and church life and that it's become a big buzz word for the last decade or two. People have realized that the Sunday worship routine was much like a spectator sport with people on stage providing the entertainment, but that it left a relational vacuum. This way of doing church has left people starving for intimate, Kingdom-centered community.

The past decade or two has seen the rise of the small group ministry and a resurgence of the "house church" model which both attempt to fill this relational vacuum. Churches are rightly encouraging their people to get plugged into small groups, life groups, covenant groups, community groups, small churches, and other forms of groups. You'll hear reminders from the pulpit that the Sunday morning worship service does not take the place of real, authentic, kingdom community with one another. This has been a healthy move back toward the kind of community we see characterizing the early church in Acts 2:

*"All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:43-47).*

As a staff member of a church, I wholeheartedly support the power and effectiveness of small groups for living out our Christian life together -- growing in discipleship, encouraging one another, sharing resources, offering each other accountability and reaching out to others in evangelism and community service. However, just recently my eyes have been opened as to how far we have to go in achieving the kind of life-on-community God has truly created us for.

**Here's my observation: Community has become the goal of the Christian life rather than the natural starting point.**

This is one huge difference between our highly individualized American culture and the ancient localized, tight-knit community structures of the early church. The early Christians lived in close proximity to one another, shared their resources as needed, watched and raised each others' children, ate together regularly, prayed together naturally and *out of this community flowed service, witness, worship, discipleship and all the other practices that should characterize the life of every Christian.* They started with community and the rest of their Christian life flowed from it.

As I see it, many of our churches are trying everything they can to help busy, scattered people form community in the first place. We use programs, classes, worship gatherings, seminars, events,

outreach and service opportunities, mission trips and retreats all as ways for people to hopefully connect with one another and begin to establish some level of community with other Christians. But the point is: Sadly, we live in a society that has chosen to make intimate community an after thought, a secondary concern that we might get around to if we can somehow fit it into our busy schedules -- you know, "when life slows down a bit."

This reality was brought home recently to me today in two ways. First, my wife and I were invited to consider joining a small group of young couples from our church who meet on Sunday nights for dinner fellowship and Bible study. We said that we would love to but... and here come the excuses: We live 45 minutes away from church and these friends, we really love lazy Sundays watching football on the couch at home, and we don't really want to make the drive across the city twice in one day (we are there in the morning for church and this would be 3 hours of driving).

Welcome to life in 21st century America! We hardly know our neighbors next door, our friends are scattered about the Twin Cities suburbs, and, apparently sometimes we're more worried about gas mileage and football than the life-in-community God has created us for. This is the world we live in, and I know we're not alone. What are we to do?

Secondly, however, one wonders if we have to go along with the societal norm. On a recent Nomad Podcast, Pastor Greg Boyd was talking about intentional kingdom community and the necessity of swimming against the current of the American culture. Greg and his wife decided to uproot themselves from their comfortable suburban home and lifestyle in order to move into an inner city neighborhood along with two other couples from their church to live side-by-side and "do life together."

They now share cars, food, get together at each other's homes two or three nights a week for food, fun, fellowship and prayer. Nothing fancy. Just good old-fashioned community. But, and it's a big but, they had to intentionally go against the cultural norm, boldly uproot themselves and move across the city to establish a community from which they can now pursue kingdom service, support, growth, accountability, witness and more.

**But the bottom line is: Community shouldn't be the goal of the Christian life (as it seems to be in the church these days) but rather the natural starting point for living out the Kingdom life together.** Even with the healthy impact of the small group movement it still appears that we have a long, uphill battle ahead of us before we can experience the kind of fellowship described in Acts 2.

By Jeremy Berg

From [www.smallgrouptrader.com](http://www.smallgrouptrader.com)

Check out our FBC website @ [www.fbc-everett.org](http://www.fbc-everett.org)

April 7th, 2010

firstBaptistchurch

# Life group prayer and praise

- Please pray for **Jane Rodriguez's family**, that they could come to a mutually agreeable understanding and that her brothers would be sensitive to the wishes of the rest of the family.
- **Rose Toscano** asks that you would please pray for her.
- Please continue to pray for the pain in my lower back. My son, **Nathan** still needs a fulltime job, please pray that his part-time job can turn into that. ~ **Carolyn Kelly**
- **Sandra Signs** needs prayer.
- Please pray for **ZoAnn McBride**, she is in need of two people to rent rooms from her.
- One of our ministry partners in Cuba, **Alternán Claro**, who lives in Camaguey needs prayer.
- Please continue to pray for **Camp 3:16** and it's mission in Mexico.
- Please pray for my 18 yr old daughter **Amanda Peterson**. ~**Debra Waldron**
- Please remember to pray for our son-in-law **Al Carter** who had a stroke on 3/29/09 and is totally paralyzed. ~ **Lysle and Lois Pickard**
- Please pray for **my son** that God will soften his heart. ~ **Paul Abbitt**
- Please continue to pray for **my dad's** health. ~**Sharon Young**
- Please pray that a door would open for **Ed** to have a stable job. We are in need of a home. ~ **Ed & Lynn Biggs**
- Please pray for the **Kyla Knospe** who is having some issues with her breathing and needs to undergo a bronchoscopy on April 20th. ~ **Shelly Rohde**

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## FBC for Christ Mission Offering Sunday, April 25th



Brian Stewart



Bryan Blair

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## Pray for our Military

- Jonathan Michaels Estrella— son of Sharon Boswell.
- Jason Bjazevich—Megan Owenby's husband—Army Special Forces— Stationed in N. Carolina.
- Joel Ellis—son of John & Midge —Serving in Iraq.
- Scott Harpell—son of Brian & Lynne— Stationed at Fort Carson, CO.
- 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.
- 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 at home.
- 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.
- 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.
- Aaron Chmielewski—joined the Marines. Nephew of JoAnn Couturie



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# Life Group Happenings

## All in the Family

by florence miller

Our sympathy goes to **Jane Rodriguez** and family in the passing of Jane's mother, **Tessie**, on this past Tuesday. Jane has been with her in Buffalo, NY and will probably be coming home sometime next week. Zak is with her but **Omar** is here in WA. Pray for Jane in this time of sadness, which is compounded by suffering with a cold and trouble sleeping. Her mother was in her mid-eighties. A stroke years ago left her with aphasia (unable to speak).

We are sorry to report that **Lois Mach**, a long-time faithful worker in ABW is currently in Providence Rehab after having fallen four times in the past three days. Staying in Rehab will be for just a prescribed short stay and she will then be moved to a care facility. When a place is found, her address and phone # will be made available through this CareNecton. Keep her in your prayers.

By the time you read this, **John Van Dalen's** cataract surgery on April 6th has occurred and he has joined the increasingly large but elite group of post cataract surgery individuals who can see better but still need their glasses, (albeit new expensive ones). His surgery went very well and he can take the patch off today.

News from **Camp John 3:16**: April 4. "Just as the team from Everett was leaving, a team from Addy, WA arrived. This team is continuing their work with the children of the Yucatan--work they've been involved in for many years with Gama and Ligia. They are taking Camp John 3:16 outside the borders of the property; assisting in evangelical programs for children in several pueblos during this Easter season. We had the privilege of being with them at the celebration in Dzidzantun on Friday and saw how the kids enjoyed the team, the crafts, singing, and playing games that teach them about the Bible and Jesus' love."

We have 6 hydrangeas left for purchase. They are \$20.00, please call **Ruelyn**, 25.870.1824.

Now is the time to register for Ross Point camp. Mark your vacation calendars etc. Questions, feel free to email **Steve Dittoe** at [stevedittoe@verizon.net](mailto:stevedittoe@verizon.net). Dates for Ross Point are July 25th thru the 31st.

A Memorial Bench in remembrance of your loved one is being placed at First Baptist Church. Cost is \$40.00 and is available on a first come, first served basis. Please call Debbie Benedetto, 425.337.7100 or Oma Kiniry, 425.353.9315 for more information. You can pick up an application in the Church Office.



Join us for VBS...As they participate in fun-filled activities, children will learn about God's amazing love and His Word, the Bible! We will have a great time with lively songs, hilarious skits, creative crafts, exciting games, Bible stories and tasty snacks— all of the things that make Vacation Bible School so much fun for children.

**Where: FBC Campus**

**When: June 28<sup>th</sup>-July 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Time: 9am-12:00**

**Who: Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> Grade**



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# Lifegroup Contributing Opportunities

## Greeters needed

Greeters needed: Carol Kelly is looking for a few good people!  
We have a need for more greeters during the services on Sunday morning. If you would like to help out, please call her .

### USHER CAPTAIN 2010:

April— Pete Sontra  
Lucky Elkins  
May— Craig Reisen  
Ron & Kay Olson

### COFFEE HOUR 2010

April 11th  
Florence Miller  
Women of Purpose  
April 18th  
Vince Ivelia  
AM Men's Group  
April 25th  
Mel Tessness  
Church Elders  
May 2nd  
Bill Erickson  
Clipper Class

- April 6th            Oma Kiniry and Debbie Benedetto
- April 8th            Steve Hofert
- April 10th          Del Hards, Darrell Olson
- April 11th          Anita Prinzing
- April 12th          Vince Ivelia
- April 13th          Joanne Beecher-Vanhorn

Happy Birthday

## Update April 4th, 2010

**Adult attendance: 551**

**Children: 9 am: 38 + 12      10:30 am 22 + 14**

**Youth Small Group: Middle School: Attended Easter Service**




This Biennial Celebration is going to be on May 14-15 At the Summit Church in Boise, Idaho with special Guest Speaker, Efrem Smith. There are registration forms in the office or you can get yours online at <http://abcnw.org/2010/01/region-biennial-celebration-2010>. The theme this year is Fresh Heart for a new time; *“May Jesus himself our God and Father put a fresh heart in you, invigorate your work, enliven your speech.”* 2 Thess. 2:17

## Check out our NEW Women's & Men's Bible Studies

**ANOINTED  
TRANSFORMED  
REDEEMED**

*A Study of David*

Beth Moore, Kay Arthur & Priscilla Shirer



\$13.00 for the book

Wednesdays,  
April 21<sup>st</sup>  
6:30 pm  
CC - #156


DISCOVERING HOW TO IMPACT YOUR WORLD

**UNCOMMON**

**DARE TO BE**

**Men's Bible Study**

\$8.50 for the study book  
Wednesdays  
April 14-May 26th  
6:30-8:00



**TONY DUNGY**

Check out our FBC website @ [www.fbc-everett.org](http://www.fbc-everett.org)