

Getting Your Group to Gel

by Rick Howerton

We knew they weren't happy with group and they finally revealed why. They had been part of a small group in another church. That group had become the closest of friends. Their statement to our group that night was... "We're not experiencing friendship like we thought we would when we joined the group. We don't know why but we just don't think this group is ever going to be like the group we came from."

They then went on to talk about the depth of relationship they had with one another in their prior group and announced that that's what they needed at this time in their lives.

This is not an unusual scenario. There are some specific things you can do to help your group gel:

Change the Paradigm. Group members join a group with a pre-determined vision concerning the level of connection that will be experienced. In most instances, the paradigm comes from past experience. If the group member was once in an authoritarian discipleship group that focused on weekly meetings and were held accountable for Scripture memory, daily Bible reading, and in-depth Bible study but little relational connection, that's what the group member is expecting.

If the group member attended a stale Sunday morning class, the individual will be expecting that listening to a talking head and answering a few questions (remaining silent if choosing to do so) is the norm. It will be important that you change the paradigm for those who are in your group who have been involved in Bible studies that were not relational. A few suggestions: The new paradigm verbally. Use phrases like, "We're about more than Bible study, we're doing life together." "I'm really enjoying our becoming friends." "I'm grateful that God is allowing us to experience life together." "I consider you guys my family." Etc...

The small group meeting, talk about experiences and conversations that took place with group members between meetings. An agreed upon written covenant that includes being involved in one another's life issues and experiences and that you are available to one another 24/7.

Be Recreational: Groups gel when they play together. Find out what games (indoor or outdoor) your group members are willing to play and get together just to play. Remember this... There will always be a few group members who are hesitant. Go forward anyway. Once the laughter and fun is in full swing, they'll overcome their hesitancy.

Be Familial: Invite group members to your home at times other than meeting times. Invite them to watch a movie, play cards, play a board game, watch a special sporting event on TV, cookout and play corn hole, etc...

Celebrate Together: Celebration bonds hearts. If someone gets a promotion at work, completes a degree, gets their first hit (if kids are in your groups), has a birthday or anniversary, etc... get together for some kind of celebration. Throw a party any time you can!

Use Technology to Connect Between Meetings: Between meetings, e-mail group members jokes, hilarious videos, etc... and ask them to send theirs to the rest of the group when they see or receive one. This will give group members something to talk about when they get together. A caution... Some worksites do not allow employees to view these while at work.

Be on Mission Together: When groups are involved in a common missional cause becoming close is almost always the outcome. Work at a homeless shelter on a Saturday together, do a garage sale for a single mom, clean the home of a shut-in and serve he/she lunch, etc... Better still... go on a mission trip together. I promise, you'll come back much closer than when you left.

Retreat Together: Everybody needs a break from the hassles of everyday life. Set a weekend aside for your small group to go camping or rent a chalet in the mountains. Let groups of people go their separate ways (some will like to hike, some shop, some play golf, etc...) but get together for as many meals as possible and always have supper together. Don't overdo Bible study, devotions, etc... just allow group members to enjoy one another's company.

From www.smallgroupexchange.com

Life group prayer and praise

- Pray that Fun in the Sun will bring people to Christ. **Darcy Stanyo**
- Pray for **Larry** as he recovers from pacemaker implant and pray for **Tristan** as he recovers from staph infection. **Keri Bauer**
- Pray for **Margaret Hastings** she needs an apartment.
- **Cam and I** praise God that my mom **Sandy Abood** got some good news the other day. She will begin rehabilitation on July 6th please continue to pray for her. ~ **Jenn Decker**
- Please pray for the **Stanyo family** as they deal with the trustees of her **Aunt Donna's** estate, they are holding up the burial.
- Continue praying for the **Stewart family**.
- Please pray for the **Erickson family** at the passing of **Jim**.
- **Darlene Udman** asks that we pray for her family during this very trying time.
- **Heidi McLeod** needs prayer for health.
- **Linda Royer** needs prayer for healing.
- Please pray for the **McDonald** family, we are in crisis right now with one of us in a lot of pain and frustration. ~ **Kate**
- **Prayer** for son **Jeff** for his safety as he leaves for Afghanistan and for his band of brothers. **Barbra Lillard**
- Pray for restored use of right arm, balance and speech, and for health and happiness for **Emma**. **Mark Deiner**
- **Alison Nealy** asks prayer for her cousin **Lisa** The doctors have discovered it to be cancer and will be doing surgery tomorrow. Please pray for the family.
- Our students will be taking a mission trip to Mexico this summer from July 10-20. We will be working with **Pastor Gama** at a Children's camp in Merida. Mexico. .
- Pray for my friends **dad, Steve**, was diagnosed with 2 brain tumors. ~**Carol Jodock**
- **Nealy** family needs prayer for grandpa **Jack** that doctors are able to get his sugar levels under control so he will be healed.~ **Alison**

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 Mani-toba.*
- *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.*
- *Jeffrey Lillard—son of Barbara Lillard — Srg. In Army, Stationed at Fort Lewis.*
- *ENS Andrew E. Timpner (fiancé to Christin Suthard) on deployment with USS Momsen.*
- *Devin Abbitt—nephew of Paul Abbitt - Marine, state-*

Life Group Happenings

All in the Family

by Florence Miller

Some fishermen's only opportunity to brag is about "the big one that got away!". Not so, with **Terry Brundage** who on a recent Ketchikan, Alaskan fishing trip with **Doug** caught a 70 pound halibut! Lots of wonderful eating and omega-3. Congratulations! Their son, **Justin** is a deckhand on a boat at a fishing lodge there, giving them a reason for the trip. How are your arm muscles?

Sheri Weiderspohn and her husband, family and friends have gone to Canada's Loon Lake for fishing for ten days. And in the rest of her month's vacation from being our most friendly and helpful Church receptionist, she will be painting her kitchen, two houses, (a rental and her Mom's), besides doing yard work and finishing a patio. When she returns to the front desk we may see her dozing off.

Darcy Stanyo will be the substitute receptionist while Sheri is off. She too fits the bill for being friendly and helpful.

Eleanor Peterson had family visiting her, son **Jon** and children **Katelynn & Joel** from Cedar Rapids, Also last week and this week daughters **Ruth Herman** from Paris, TN. And **Ruby Ries** from Mitchell, SD. Lots of work and talking got done.

Breaking News: **Betsy Johnson**, daughter of **Ross and Jane Johnson** is being married to **Sam Brown** in July.

The Erickson and Burgess family said a final farewell to **Jim Erickson** at a memorial service this past Saturday. The church was filled with his many friends and family, including **Matthew Burgess** who traveled from Nashville and is the nephew of Jim and son of **Jack and Mary Elaine Burgess**. Jim has been a member of this church since a baby. In these final years he has been suffering from congenital heart failure and diabetes. Now all of that is removed and he is in his heavenly home and at peace.

Hello Friends: This has been quite a week for our family. On Tuesday morning my mom suffered a very serious stroke which nearly took her life and affected her speech and the entire right side of her body. Surgery was done by catheter to try to remove the blood clot from her brain, but that was unsuccessful. However, it was found during the procedure that there was some blood flow making it past the clot. It was a bad news/good news situation in which the doctor was able to offer some hope of recovery. We are all pulling together with friends and family members praying and supporting each other during this difficult time. My brother, Steve, set up a blog so that dad can post updates on mom's progress and friends can post prayers and encouraging comments. If you wish to follow her progress here's the link <http://bettieschallenge.blogspot.com/>. You'll want to read from the bottom up. Please continue to pray for mom's full recovery. she appears to be making good progress already. Thank you for all the support. **Kim**

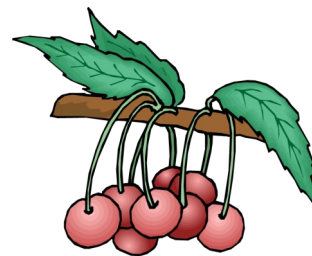


We need canopies for Fun In the Sun

July 4th

12:30 - 3:00

Cherries are coming—call **Ron Newman** at 425-397-0676, He will be going after them on July 9th. Bings will be \$3.50 and Raniers will be \$5.00 per pound



S.A.M. PICNIC
JULY 20TH
NOON

Life group contributing opportunities

A Study of PSALM 119: “Discovering and Using God’s Treasures” Summer Bible study begins this 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. There is no charge for enrollment. Invite a friend.

Happy Birthday

<i>Lori Majors</i>	<i>July 2nd</i>
<i>Darcy Stanyo</i>	<i>July 3rd</i>
<i>Lois Tysseling</i>	<i>July 5th</i>
<i>Barbara Hansen</i>	<i>July 6th</i>
<i>Shain Beecher-Vanhorn</i>	<i>July 7th</i>

Also, if you have an old *FunInTheSun* T-shirt and would like to donate it, we could use it, bring it in to the church office anytime!

Adult attendance: 202 Children: 9 am: 24/9 10:30 am: 32/12

**Youth Small Group: Middle School No Class
High School 8/3**

USHER CAPTAIN 2009:

July—Pete Sontra
Luckey Elkins

COFFEE HOUR 2009

July 5
Tom Warren
SAM

July 12
David Brock
Men's Life Group

July 19
Mel Tessness
Church Elders

July 26
Jeanne Iversen
Outreach

July 4th Fun in the Sun: We need 10 more people to walk the parade route and pass out cards to advertise our festival. Again this year FBC will offer a street fair following the Everett July 4th downtown parade at 12:30 until 3:00 pm. This year's July 4th falls on a Saturday and so we want you to be sure you put it on your calendar. A couple of thousand people show up each year from our community and we get the opportunity to *show them* the love of Christ. Would your Life Groups be willing adopt one of the stations or venues? These include:

- Espresso
- Face painting
- Float in the parade
- Children's inflatable #1, #2, #3
- Miniature golf
- Set-up crew
- Clean-up crew
- Welcome & Registration Desk
- Cotton Candy machine
- Popcorn Machine
- Street Hockey
- Clown Ministry



Our student ministry has already adopted hotdog sales and root beer floats, and our worship ministry has adopted the stage and band. For more information and to volunteer contact bharpell@fbc-everett.net.