



Small Groups & Reality Shows

by Matt Graybill

My wife and I love watching *The Biggest Loser*. Perhaps you have a favorite reality show like *Survivor*, *American Idol*, *Amazing Race*, or the *Apprentice*. It's amazing how we naturally associate with one or two people on the show and hope they make it to the finals, win the competition, or make it through to the next round. We have our favorite player and we build up with anxiety or sit in fear of a mistake when we watch them perform. On the flip side, we cheer equally as hard for the person we can't stand. We get excited if they mess up or they're voted off.

A Crave for Fame to a Crave for Community

What I find interesting is that people audition for these shows with the purpose to win not only American hearts, but money, fame, and honor. They start out with a purpose to win, but what happens during the course of the show is that they live in community with others. Community in some ways disrupts their purpose. They start creating alliances with others or develop friendships, where they feel bad when someone gets voted off or eliminated from the show. They start to say things like "don't take it personal" or "man you know I love you like a brother, but I had to write your name down."

We witness the tension of: "Do I want what is best for community?" or "Do I go for the win?" With all of these shows, competition and pride bring community down. The purpose is to win, the purpose is for the contestant to feel that they are better than everyone else in the group and that is why they should reign as champion....at least for that season. The theme is focused on the individual winning and rising above the rest. We then celebrate that individual or couple who has taken down the rest.

Growing with God and Others

Small groups are a place where people meet reality and if we were honest, sometimes our groups look like a reality show. We're on a journey where we experience joys or we go through the obstacles of life all while trying to maintain focus. It's in a small group where we form an alliance. An alliance that says we will commit our lives to God and each other no matter what lies ahead. But the purpose of our small group is not for us individually to win or out play others.

Our purpose isn't to vote people out of the group because they're a weak player or because they're competition. Our purpose in being a small group is to be a community—a community that is

committed to growing in their relationships with God, others in the group, and the community in which they find themselves.

Often in a group setting, it's easy to hear someone express a struggle they are having and then the rest of the groups sits there like Simon Cowell shaking their heads thinking, "What in the world was that...you are a loser." Maybe we don't think those exact thoughts, but it's easy to think of yourself as better than others. When we do this we create a wedge between that person, and it inhibits community. Naturally, we gravitate towards meeting the needs and wants of self.

As sinners we will continually wrestle with loving ourselves vs. loving God and others. But as we look at the small group Jesus so often found himself in with the disciples, we see him constantly focused on loving the hearts of the disciples and those in the community he was in. Jesus knew his purpose.

What is our purpose? Is it a love of self, or a love for God and others? Sure some of us are at the receiving end of that love, but receiving doesn't mean that the flow of love stops with us. We read throughout the Scriptures that Jesus brings healing and then says, "Now go!" Go and tell others how I've changed you. Go and love those who have wronged you. Go and share your story with others.

Discuss Your Reality

Too often we come into a group with the same purpose of a reality show....our pride comes through.... we play the game well, giving the illusion of community, but really our pride and our judgmental hearts start to split the group. Either we try to win for what's best for us, or we win as a community of believers. So as a group, take time to discuss:

1. *What is our purpose as a community of believers?*
2. *Are we growing in our relationships with God, others in our group and serving our communities? Are we in the same place we were a year ago or have we grown closer to Jesus and others?*
3. *As a group, how have we let pride, competition, or a love of self build barriers between us as a group, or has it built barriers between us and God?*
4. *What are some specific action steps that you can take as a group to grow as a community of believers?*

Score: Community 1 vs. Individualism 0

From smallgroupexchange.com—printed with permission

Life group prayer and praise

- Please pray for my husband **Larry**, he has been having blackouts and the doctors don't know why—pray for healing and wisdom. ~ **Kerri Bauer**
- Please pray for the **McDonald** family, we are in crisis right now with one of is in a lot of pain and frustration. ~ **Kate**
- **Carol Kelly** asks that we pray for strength and peace to get through the week and for my marriage.
- Praise God that he is in my life!~**Charlie Vana & Gary Cox**
- We would like to praise God, my mom and dad are well! We are so thankful to you all for your faithful prayers! ~ **Cam and Jenn Decker**
- **Darlene Hegeberg** asks that we pray for **her sister, Mary**, she has a rare blood disease and needs to be well enough to go to the Mayo Clinic on June 22nd, she has a muscle abscess that needs healing.
- **Robin**, friend of **Darcy**, has had her Crohn's Disease return. Robin spent the evening in ER waiting for results on the Cat Scan. They found a obstruction in her small intestine and admitted her to the surgical unit in Los Alamitos. The pain is finally under control and have started her on antibiotics and the "big guns" steroids to try and avoid any more abdominal surgery. We are hoping that the meds work and the surgery is not necessary. ~**Darcy Stanyo**
- **Alison Nealy** asks prayer for her cousin **Lisa** who has an abscessed hole in her colon. The doctors don't know what has caused the hole but cannot perform the surgery right now because the infection is so severe. Please pray that the infection clears up and the surgeons can find out what the problem is.
- They sent **Eryn McCormick** to Children's last Wednesday night for testing. She was released. They have not completely ruled out appendicitis but the doctors believe it is most likely a bad urinary tract infection. Please pray for continued healing for **Eryn** as she is recovering.
- Prayer for **Mel Tessness's brother Lester** who is in the hospital very ill and needs prayer for healing and quick recovery he is dealing with bleeding ulcers.
- Pray for **Darcy Stanyo** as she waits for an extension on unemployment could be three weeks before she has an answer. Also continued prayers for her family and that Darcy and Nina will be able to attend the memorial in CA on June 20th.
- 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. Please continue to keep our team in your prayers.

Dr. Fred Prinzing will be teaching a new 12 week series on Psalm 119—"Discovering and Using God's Treasures" on Wednesdays beginning July 1st from 12:00 to 1:00 pm in the Pacific Room. Everyone is invited to attend, invite your friends and come on down!

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.*
- *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, 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*

Life Group Happenings

All in the Family

by *florence miller*

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW GOOD THE LANDSCAPING IS LOOKING THIS YEAR?

A very dedicated team of men and women from our church body are tending the bushes, the lawns, the trees and the sprinkler system: **Dave Strube, Arlee and Jonathan Barker, Jerry and Jeanette Thompson, Tom Willadsen, Lyle and Gloria Gordon, Karen Mark and John Van Dalen.** It is a never-ending job in the Spring with the growth of everything, including weeds. If you would like to help the team call **Dave or John.** If you would like to convey your thanks for a great job, tell them!

Brian and Lynn Harpell have been soaking in the sun and surf in Cancun, Mexico. A much deserved respite for them. Ask them how many books they read or better yet, how many hours spent not really doing much of anything.

SAM's semi-annual used book sale was a great success and they want to thank the church staff for allowing the disruption of the Pacific Room and for all the members who purchased books. All proceeds go for the following missions: Youth Mission trip, Young Life, Women's Emergency Housing, VOA, Street Ministry, Salvation Army, Ross Point Family Camp Scholarship, Mission in Laos - Matt Mann, Kodiak Alaska Mission, Gama Kanul (missionary in Mexico), Food Baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas, Missionary to Congo-Ed Noyes, Everett Gospel Mission, Everett Community Church, Delta Baptist Church and American Baptist Women, all of which totaled this past year a lot!

Fallen Veterans

For those who died on foreign soil at their buddies' feet.
For those who died in victory or for those lost in defeat.
For those who died in the air, on land, or on the sea.
For those who died in service to keep this country free.
Many have given their all and never made it home.
Some came back to nothing and sadly died alone.
We served our country gladly with little or no regret.
This poem that I have written is so others won't forget.
For those we lost were husbands, brothers, dad or son.
We now take the time to honor each and every one.
Let the honor guard salute you and the bugler play.
I'll gladly stand and bow my head on this Memorial Day.
This poem was published in the Mukilteo Newspaper and was written by our own **Earl Stephens**



June 13th
Les Schwab
Evergreen Way

THIS CAR WASH IS BEING SPONSORED BY THE YOUTH GOING ON THE MEXICO MISSION TRIP AND WILL BE HELD FROM 9:00-2:00 PM IN THE PARKING LOT AT THE EVERGREEN WAY, LES SCHAWB STORE.



VBS
POWERANG EXPRESS

June 22-26th
8:30-12:00

Life group contributing opportunities

Happy Birthday



One Great Hour of Sharing offering is used for development projects focused on meeting chronic human needs by enabling individuals or groups to establish or maintain a more adequate quality of life.

- June 10th Mary Smith, Tom Warren
- June 12th Ron Newman
- June 13th LaNell Jansen Kirsten Wojahn
- June 14th Sandy Jodock

We need canopies for Fun In the Sun

Congregational Meeting June 28th, 9:00 am in the Worship Center

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!

Update June 7, 2009

Adult attendance: 229 Children: 9 am|| 28/11 10:30 am|| 43/15
 Youth Small Group: Middle School || 14/4
 High School || 9/4

USHER CAPTAIN 2009:

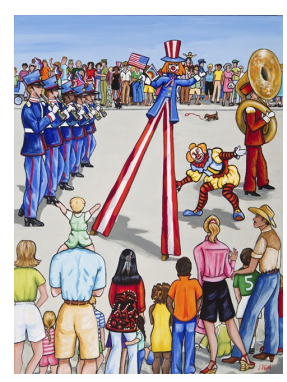
June—Darrell Olsen
 Marc Owenby
 July—Pete Sontra
 Luckey Elkins

COFFEE HOUR 2009

June 14 Barb Menia
 Women of Purpose
 June 21 Darrell Olson
 Foundation
 June 28 John Van Dalen
 The Followers
 July 5 Tom Warren
 SAM
 July 12 David Brock
 Men's Life Group

July 4th Fun in the Sun: 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.