

Why Groups?

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Transcription of interview

Groups, or Discovery Groups, are one of the pillars of building a movement. Groups are the place where we take people who are far from God and help them on a journey of discovering who God is to the place where the entire group of people come to a place where they want to serve him and they want to follow Jesus. So they take people who are far from God and they take them through a journey and process of discovery to the point where they want to be followers of Jesus.

A group begins with a person of peace who is basically someone who is open to you, open to the gospel, open to what you're sharing, and open to introducing you to his friends and his family or his social network. Once you are in with a person of peace and his social network, then a group is a discovery process - it's not a preaching or a teaching process - but it's a *discovery process* of learning more about God and coming to a place of wanting to follow him.

We do that by training people to ask four basic questions. Now people have molded this and changed this around the world; they've phrased it in different ways, but there are four fundamentally basic questions we ask:

1. "What are you thankful for?" Some people ask, "What's going well in your life?" or "What makes you smile today or this week?"
2. "What are you struggling with?" Some people say, "What stresses you out right now?" or "What has made you frown this week?" There's many ways to ask that, but the basic question is, "What are you struggling with?"
3. When we look at a passage of Scripture which we put in front of them, we ask, "What does this passage of Scripture say; what does this passage of Scripture mean? What are you going to do about it; how are you going to put it into practice?" Those three basic questions are the way that we discover truth from God's Word.
4. "Who will you tell?" or "How will you share what you've discovered with someone else?"

So those fundamental things lay the foundation for what will eventually become a new church or new gathering. The elements of a new church or gathering are worship, community, nurture and mission. And those four elements are put down in the discovery group and people begin to journey towards becoming a church at the same time as journeying towards discovering who God is and who Christ is.

So they go through this journey of discovery, but as they begin to tell their friends, their relatives and people around them, they also begin to start new groups. These groups often will multiply before anyone in the group is a believer.

So we're after multiple processes:

1. We're trying to help people discover who God is, who Jesus is, and become followers of Jesus.
2. We're helping to form healthy church on their journey, so that when they come to Christ, healthy church is forming in those places.
3. We're building movement, because we're multiplying from the beginning.

So there are parallel processes taking place. In traditional church-planting we do these in separate processes. When I was planting traditional churches, I'd try and get people saved, then I'd try and make disciples, then I'd try and plant churches, then I'd try and train leaders.

But when we plant groups, all of these processes are happening in parallel. That's how we get to movements of the gospel pretty rapidly: through multiplying across cities and across nations.



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