

"Grow in a Community Group "

Overview



Community is a hot topic these days. There is no shortage of people and organizations touting the importance of community (and just as many people lamenting how difficult it is for them to actually experience it).

Spiritual growth is maybe a bit less on people's radar. While most would say that spirituality is important, it is still regarded by many as a very private affair and something people can explore on their own (in whatever way they see fit).

Christianity views both of these things as of vital importance - but also things we must pursue in tandem. This lesson will explore how community and spiritual growth go hand-in-hand (which is why being part of a Community Group really does matter).

Getting Started *Group Growth*



1. Have you ever played on a sports team? What was that like? What did you learn from that experience?
 2. What kind of a team would you love to be a part of (consider ministry, educational, military, political, neighborhood, medical, etc.). Why? What do you imagine the team trying to accomplish?
 3. Do you find you learn better in a group or by yourself? Do you tend to grow spiritually more in a group or by yourself?
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The Text



¹¹ So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³ until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

¹⁴ Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵ Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:11-16 (NIV)

The Audio (optional)



"Grow in a Community Group " - by Kyle Corbin, Sept. 22/19

NOTES: _____

Understanding



1. In today's passage, the Apostle Paul describes the way in which God's people are to function as a corporate group. What is Paul hoping will be accomplished as the people of God function in the way he describes (vs. 13-14, 16 (check also Eph. 4:1-3))?
2. What are the various types of roles needed in order for the church to function properly (vs. 11). What do each of these roles do? How does each one support the health of the Body of Christ?
3. Where are people to be found to fulfill the roles mentioned in verse 11 (see also vs. 3)? Whose responsibility is it to ensure the church grows?
4. Why do you suppose God has designed His people to function in this inter-dependent way? What is achieved by this method that individual growth alone would struggle to accomplish?
5. What does it mean to "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ" (vs. 13, 15)? Consider 1 Cor. 13:8-13, 1 Cor. 14:19-20, Gal. 4:1-7, 2 Thess. 1:3-4, Heb. 5:11-6:2, 2 Pet. 1:5-8.
6. What is the danger of not structuring the Body of Christ in the way described in this passage (vs. 14)? What evidence have you seen of the church (or individuals) struggling when this structure is absent?

Applying



1. A Community Group ideally consists of 10-12 people who meet regularly for the purpose of studying God's Word, prayer, mutual care and encouragement, and support of the vision and mission of the church. If all of this is happening, do we need group meetings of other sizes? What is the benefit of Sunday morning services? One-on-one meetings? How can each of these contribute to the spiritual health of the people? Do we need any other size groupings?

2. Which of the roles described in verse 11 are you in most need of today? Which role do you feel you could best contribute to (i.e. how could you strengthen your group and your church)?
3. "Full salvation cannot be obtained until all of God's children obtain it together..." ("Exposition of Ephesians (Vol. 7, p. 196)", Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001)). Do you agree or disagree with this statement (consider Ephesians 1:15, 3:18-19, 6:18, 2 Tim. 4:8)? What are the implications of your answer for the way we practice our faith?
4. Are there any circumstances where it may be OK for a person to not be in a Community Group?
5. Aside from what you may have identified in Question #4, what other factors do you think prevent people from joining a Community Group? How might you help people overcome each of these obstacles (including any obstacles noted from question #4)? (NB: If you are not in a Community Group, how might you work towards joining one)?

Memory Verse(s)



From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)

Extra Resources



- ❖ *"Grow in a Community Group"* by Pastor Kyle Corbin ("Immanuel Church" website, Sept. 22, 2019). In this sermon Pastor Kyle outlines the purpose and the potential of the Christian life that includes community group involvement.
- ❖ *"Making Small Groups Work"* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend (Zondervan, 2003). This book describes the benefits of small (i.e. community) groups, principles for how to lead a group, and strategies for dealing with problems associated with running a group. A great resource!
- ❖ *"Small Group Leadership Training Program"* (available from "SmallGroups.com"). This video-based training program helps equip people to lead small groups well. Topics include developing a vision for small groups, how to be a healthy leader, building authentic relationships, and more. Participant guides can also be ordered.