

1. The Objective:

To help pastors effectively shepherd their flocks through the formation and multiplication of small groups.

Growing churches decentralize pastoral care and discipleship through the empowering and ongoing multiplication of holistic small groups.

These small groups are characterized by other-centered, sacrificial, life-on-life relationships that challenge and encourage Christians toward Christ-likeness, evangelism, biblical literacy, and acts of service.

2. The Major Teaching Points:

¹² When He had finished washing their feet, He put on His clothes and returned to His place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" He asked them. ¹³ "You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.

¹⁵ I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. ¹⁶ I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:12-17, 34-35 (NIV)

- a. The command of Jesus requires that we develop holistic small groups.
(John 13:34-35)

- b. The example of Jesus' ministry and His development of His disciples model the priority of small groups in ministry. (Luke 6:40)
- c. The practice of the early church meeting from house to house confirms that holistic small groups are critical to the development of a healthy, growing church.
- d. The evidence of small group ministry in Korea, China, and multiple other cultures around the world affirms that holistic small groups are an essential part of the disciple-making process and the fulfilling of the Great Commission.

**The small group becomes the main distribution vehicle
for New Testament love to occur.**

3. The Research:

The continuous multiplication of small groups is a universal church growth principle. Churches that are growing qualitatively and quantitatively, 78% of them promote the multiplication of small groups through cell division (Natural Church Development).

4. Practical Implementation:

- a. What is the role of the senior pastor in the development of a small group ministry? What must he do? What must he empower others to do?
 - Make a commitment to developing small groups as your life-change agents in the church.
 - Become secure in who you are as a pastor.
 - The primary purpose of the pastor is to develop holistic small groups.

- Specifics:
 1. Preach about Jesus and His small groups.
 - Teach through the book of Acts, through the lens of small groups.
 2. Model small groups
 3. Provide curriculum to guard doctrine.
 4. Find the most gifted person in the church to lead the small group ministry.
- b. How can a small group ministry be developed, enhanced, or revitalized?
 - Find that key leader.
- c. What must occur to provide small-group leaders with the oversight and coaching necessary to help them minister to their groups effectively?
 - Develop a structure where on a regular basis, small group leaders get loved, refreshed, encouraged, and trained.
- d. What kind of organizational models are needed to allow the small group ministry to continue to remain healthy?
- e. What resources are available to ensure doctrinal accuracy in small groups?

**Your church will never grow beyond the commitment
of your leaders...**

**The #1 problem in small group ministry is lack
of oversight of small group leaders.**

Key Questions:

1. What role do small groups play in your church?
2. How can you build on what is in place to make small groups even more effective life-change agents?

Resources at our website: LivingontheEdge.org

Unstoppable by Chip Ingram, Audio series, LivingontheEdge.org

The Miracle of Life Change by Chip Ingram, Audio & DVD series, LivingontheEdge.org

The Invisible War by Chip Ingram, Audio & DVD series, LivingontheEdge.org