

# THE THEOLOGY OF SMALL GROUPS

## *The Role of Small Groups in Discipleship*

### A Call to Discipleship

Acts 5: 42; 12: 12

**Introduction:** This past September 11th marked the tenth anniversary of our Small Groups Ministry at Alliance Bible Church of McHenry. Looking back over the past ten years seems a good thing to do with respect to assessing where we are today in relation to where we thought we would be; however, the most important thing to bear in mind is the accomplishment of our vision/mission. Have we achieved our goals? Are we fulfilling the ultimate purpose for which we were founded?

#### I. Understanding Some of the Myths and Truths About Small Group Ministry

- A. Myth: Small Groups is appropriate for the Mega-Church.
- B. Myth: Small Group Ministry is a passing fad.
- C. Myth: Small Group Ministry is all about Church Growth.
- D. Myth: It's all about the Small Groups.
- E. Truth: It's really about discipleship.
- F. Jesus provided the perfect model for making disciples.
- G. Three essential elements in disciple-making
  1. Disciples are made intentionally.
  2. Disciples are to be like Christ.
  3. Disciples are made in relationship.

#### II. The Purpose of Small Group Ministry

##### A. Our Small Groups Ministry Vision/Mission Statement:

*We are a church of connected small groups that meet purposefully on a regular basis to equip one another for ministry, to love and build up one another in Christ, to know Him intimately, and to reach out to a lost and dying world in obedience to the Great Commission.*

##### B. Scriptural Foundations

1. A church of connected small groups—I Corinthians 12: 14-25
2. Equipping one another for ministry—Ephesians 4: 12
3. Loving and building up one another—John 13: 35; I John 3: 11
4. Knowing Him intimately—Ephesians 4: 13
5. Reaching out to a lost and dying world—Matthew 28: 19, 20

##### C. The four elements of a typical small group meeting

1. Upward: Praying for one another
2. Inward: Loving one another
3. Outward: Reaching out to those who do not know Him
4. Forward: Making disciples

#### III. A Call to Discipleship

- A. Discipleship is more than an individual experience.
- B. Discipleship requires a commitment of the will.
- C. Discipleship requires action.
- D. Discipleship means becoming a part of a small group.
- E. Participating in the forthcoming Community Bible Experience (CBE)

And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying.  
**Acts 5: 42 NASB**

And when he [Peter] realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many gathered together and were praying.  
**Acts 12: 12**

And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."<sup>38</sup> "This is the great and foremost commandment."<sup>39</sup> "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'"  
**Matthew 22: 37-39**

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,<sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."  
**Matthew 28:19**

