

“Community”
Brad House
Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

With this in mind, I would like to suggest that there are three primary functions of the church for which community groups can and should be the vehicle. They are discipleship, pastoral care, and mission.

By leveraging one-on-many preaching with one-another discipleship in community, we get the advantage of clear teaching and the intimacy of community.

Taking what we learned from our population curve, we can build a strategy for discipleship that relies on community groups as the primary vehicle for discipleship of the bulk of the church. Then we can leverage methods like classes and mentoring to develop the smaller populations at the extremes of the curve. This allows us to focus our energy on discipling new believers and developing leaders.

So how does transformation occur in the church? Of course, this is the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but nonetheless, Scripture consistently admonishes us to respond to the gospel as a part of that process. We are not passive participants in sanctification. We are called to be active in the process of our own spiritual growth and that of our brothers and sisters.

As we live out the gospel through the help of the Holy Spirit, we are being sanctified through that work.

At the end of the day, our purpose in community is to receive the grace of God and respond by imaging him and lifting up the name of Jesus.

If community is about imaging God for his renown and his worship, then community groups must be in the business of creating disciples.

My identity is not what I do; I do out of my identity. Worship, community, and mission come out of who I am as a disciple of Jesus. This then is a response to what Jesus has done for us. It is in receiving his grace that we get to be disciples.

By leading a neighborhood group, leaders need to pray through a vision for their neighborhoods group, build a plan for achieving it, and inspire the members of their groups to carry it out.

We have come up with four basic spaces in which community groups can exist within their neighborhoods: fellowship, hospitality, service, and participation.

We want community to be natural and organic, but that doesn't mean disorganized. Having a plan can still provide authentic community. My wife and I plan family nights, vacations, birthday parties, and so on. Planning doesn't make them less authentic, but it does make them more effective.

Our structure has been designed to ensure that every active member of the church is shepherded by a leader, coach, or pastor.

Leaders are equipped to pour themselves out to their people but are often forgotten in the chain of care.

This ensures that the pastors of the church are fulfilling their responsibilities to shepherd every member of their church and leave no leader behind.

No Christian should be a cul-de-sac. Every leader/member should be discipling someone and every leader/member should be disciplined.

In my experience, I have found that the average volunteer leader has a maximum span-of-care capacity of about six relationships. While the ideal number may vary between leaders, few are able to shepherd more than six leaders well.

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As Saint Augustine said, "If you would attain to what you are not yet, you must always be displeased by what you are."