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THE ENORMOUS POWER OF A TINY GROUP

I have always been fascinated with the complex and powerful dynamics of both “Friendship” and “Discipleship”.

Discipleship is the core DNA for every Christian. According to Matthew 28:19-20 **discipleship** is our highest calling. While discipleship is our calling, **friendship** is our craving. The good news is that the definition of a true friend is actually someone who sharpens you and brings you closer to Jesus. Therefore being a true friend and finding a true friend will allow you to be discipled and disciple someone else. Yet, in our fractured-soul society, these words can cause confusion and pain.

The Lord Jesus has graciously taught us some Biblical principles that have allowed friendship and discipleship to become safe words that release great power and fruit in individual lives through something we call a “tiny group”.

Tiny groups are three individuals or two couples meeting to Biblically discuss a subject 2 times for less than 60 minutes each meeting. The length of the meetings and the number of the meetings is intentionally short. The material studied is up to the tiny group facilitator. In our church, we have a free CD library with over 30 different studies.

Tiny groups work for everyone in every walk of life, and they supplement, complement and strengthen the small groups, short groups, leadership training, and counseling ministries in our church.

I WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Why am I tired? You can serve faithfully in many ministries for many years and wonder if you ever really made a difference in someone else's life. This can cause you to lose hope, become weary and apathetic.

Every sincere Christian yearns to make a DIFFERENCE in someone else's life. We want to touch people with the love, power, and life of Jesus Christ that He has poured into our lives.

Perhaps the most astounding part of tiny groups is how much people's lives are changed in such a short time. The Word of God goes deeper because tiny groups have a specific goal with a clear end date, lots of rich sharing, and healthy expectations and boundaries.

Tiny groups allow you to help someone deal with a situation (past hurts, depression, divorce, stress, parenting, anger, co-dependency, healing, addictions, etc.) without having to have expertise on the subject. You feel safer discussing serious subjects through a CD study since the other person is not relying on you to have all of the answers. Your main goal is to encourage them and build a friendship that will allow them to feel comfortable to share things that God is doing in their life.

Because you are able to meet a SPECIFIC need with a simple CD series, you are able to make a HUGE difference in other's lives. Tiny groups empower you to make a difference in the Kingdom of God.

Results: When you feel that you are making an eternal and significant difference in your ministry; your heart becomes infused with **passion, energy and zeal**. You are more faithful to church, more faithful to tithe, more faithful to guard your tongue and more faithful to invite friends.

You are a spiritual success, God is very pleased, and you have opened the door for God to bless you and the life of the one whom you befriended/discipled. Not only that, but you are developing Leadership skills. A Leader isn't necessarily someone with a title; a leader is someone who has positive influence in the lives of others. The more tiny groups you are a part of, the more influence you have in the lives of God's people.

Romans 1:11 I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong.

I HUNGER FOR DEEP FRIENDSHIPS

Friendship is such a confusing subject for so many people. It evokes great hopes and desires. It also evokes feelings of loneliness, pain and betrayal. The Bible gives us a key principle that brings great clarity.

Proverbs 27:17 Iron sharpens iron, just as friends sharpen each other.

If you seek to be a person who sharpens others → you will have as many rich and healthy friendships that you want. You bond deeply with other people who want to be sharpened and sharpen others. Like co-captains on a football team - the strong purposes in your lives draw you together.

With tiny groups you begin to find confidence that you can minister to others. Soon you have all the friends you desire as a by-product of mutual goals – as God's Word says:

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Tiny groups quench a hunger for deep friendships.

I don't need any more friends. My life is already full and busy.

With tiny groups I can help someone, give them a friendship and then KEEP them MOVING toward ministering to others. This will prevent high maintenance friendships.

In addition, the brevity of tiny groups allows people to experiment with getting to know someone WITHOUT a long-term commitment. The "safety" of only having 2 meetings for less than 60 minutes each- frees people to be more open to the idea of getting to know others.

Proverbs 24:11 Rescue those being led away to death.

BUILDING A FAMILY (visitors and drifters)

We love small groups; however because small groups are long lasting, they are only for the members of Solid Rock and many people don't want to be in the same group for a year or more. Instead, it is a very gentle and warm transition for a **visitor** to try a tiny group with members of our church. After two weeks of the tiny group, this visitor has begun to form a friendship. It is natural and comfortable for that visitor to attend church and sit with their new friends.

In addition, when visitors complete a tiny group, the boundaries learned give a soft training to visitors about our expectations of graciousness as members of Solid Rock. Thus, this person comes into the church family prepared to be an encourager, a listener, and a cheerful servant.

Hebrews 12:13 Make level paths for your feet so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Tiny groups provide a way for every person to "Move FORWARD" in their relationship with Jesus and with their church family.

There is nothing more painful than watching a church family member drift away from Jesus. Drifting people almost always feel disconnected. They don't want to just "Come BACK to Church". Tiny Groups offer a gracious generosity to rescue the drifting Christian and give them a new close friend. God's people are filled with fervor to chase a wandering soul.

PEOPLE SKILLS

Tiny groups actually teach a person HOW to be a great friend. It teaches excellent people skills such as: listening, clear expectations, warmth, graciousness, empathy, and boundaries. The boundaries for tiny groups help with great people skills.

Laughter is MY favorite suggestion. Men are more able to relax and allow the Word of God to go much deeper into their hearts when everyone agrees to laugh.

People are often sad and hurting. Laughter is medicine to their souls. In addition, they feast on God's Word more deeply in an atmosphere of laughter and friendship.

Proverbs 17:22 A cheerful heart is good medicine.

Proverbs 15:15 The cheerful heart has a continual feast.

Most people automatically know this. However a few people never learned what a gift it is to laugh with friends. It is a great delight to watch many of these "overly intense" types quickly adapt and even enjoy it, when they are asked to be intentional about laughing.

This will cause such joy to flow in their hearts when they come to church on Sunday. Your new friends will look forward to seeing you and sitting with you during the church service.

Listening is a powerful skill to learn. We always ask one person to be the facilitator of the tiny group. The facilitator will go around the group 2 times with equal sharing.

1st time- everyone shares what he or she **liked** or **learned** in the study.

2nd time- everyone gives a praise report from their week, and a prayer request.

Then the facilitator closes in prayer after less than 60 minutes of a tiny group.

If you really want to grow in a tremendous way, you could practice a powerful skill called "**Reverberation Listening.**" In a tiny group, you can use this skill set by sharing what you liked about someone ELSE'S insights after you share what you liked about the CD's. Not only will this help YOU learn how to listen with greater depth and clarity, but also it will touch the receiver in a tender place hidden in their soul. They will feel valued and understood.

Reverberation Listening will help your new friend have confidence that: a) they can learn, b) they can study God's Word, c) they have something valuable to offer, and d) God can speak to them.

Proverbs 1:5 let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance

There is nothing more tiring than the person who wants to turn a Bible study into a deep philosophical dialogue about questions that no one can answer. "*When is the rapture?*"

The sneaky part about “Mr. Philosopher” is that he blatantly avoids any personal application of how he could grow to be more like Jesus.

Most people react with great relief when they see that the goal of a tiny group is for each person to share equally on: “What I **liked** or what I **learned** from this study.” This keeps the time together refreshing, applicable, and practical.

Philippians 4:8 Friends, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is right, whatever is holy, whatever is friendly, whatever is proper, if there is anything worthy of praise, think on these things.

ARP means Advice Requires Permission!

You seem like a nice person. We are doing a short course together. The Word of God has touched me deeply, so I take a risk and I share with you a painful failure in my life. To my HORROR you immediately begin to tell me how to FIX this. You lecture me with superior arrogance. You have no clue how many times I have tried your cliché advice, and how hard it was for me to be vulnerable with you. Now, I don’t want to be your friend.

Proverbs 18:2 a fool does not care if he understands a thing; he would rather reveal his personal opinions.

To prevent this disaster we ask everyone who does a tiny group to agree in advance NOT to give advice unless asked. This one boundary has a massive effect in making everyone feel safe and relaxed. It greatly increases people’s desire to open up to their friends. It also increases humility and it is

easier to admit weaknesses because you know that no one will lecture you.

We all want our friends to feel safe and develop a trusting relationship to where we can ASK advice from each other.

A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE

We tend to “over-spiritualize” being a disciple of Christ, hearing from God, and building our faith to believe for GREAT changes in our future. It’s not supposed to be difficult.

2nd Corinthians 3:18 ...because we continue to behold the Word of God...we are constantly being transfigured into His very own image...

The more tiny groups you do, the more Godly change is taking place in your life and in the life of your new friends. You can use the same CD series as many times as you want to for different tiny groups that you facilitate. It’s just like eating at the same restaurant over and over again. You know that the dish you ordered tastes good because you had it before. And it seems like no matter how many times you return to that same restaurant and order that same dish, it still tastes great.

Have you ever read the same scripture in the Bible more than once? Have you ever sung the same song of praise more than once? Have you ever prayed the same prayer more than once? If you have, then you were doing what Bible refers to as, *getting faith*.

Romans 10:17 faith comes by hearing...

SUCCESS!

The answer for prosperity and success in ANY area of our life (marriage, finances, health, thought life, etc...) is to meditate on God’s Word.

Psalms 1:2 Blessed is the man who finds joy in obeying God’s Word, and meditates on it day and night...and everything he does will prosper and succeed.

Joshua 1:8 this book of the law shall not depart out of your mind. Meditate on it day and night...then you shall prosper and be successful.

The word “meditate” in both scriptures comes from the Hebrew word **hâgâh**: meaning- ponder, study, speak. In other words, we aren’t going to get the prosperity and success without hearing or reading something that teaches God’s Word, thinking about it, and then speaking it out. This is what a tiny group is all about.

After listening to the CD’s in your car on the way to work, at home while on the computer, on your mp3 player while you go for a walk- you have 33% success. Once you have thought about what God’s taught you, then shared it with your tiny group, **success** is promised to you from Almighty God. This is why we ask that each person in the tiny group share at least one thing God showed them through the CD’s.

Is there any greater service that we could do for our own lives as well as for another person? Is there anything more productive or beneficial to the Kingdom of God?

CONVENIENCE

A **convenient time and location** is everything. What is more convenient than listening to a few CDs and getting together with some GREAT people to share positive things for two meetings LESS than one hour each?

You can meet anytime, anywhere. We have **FREE CHILDCARE** available during both Sunday morning services so that you can be part of a tiny group during the service that you don't attend. We also have free childcare from 5pm-7pm on the first two Sunday nights of the month.

Besides using the church during those times listed, here are some other options: Barnes and Nobles, anywhere at Market Commons, the park, or while you go for a walk.

CD's are convenient. Men love convenience even more than women and they are especially hard to connect with other men. However, even after working very hard all week long, most men can remember one thing they liked from a CD that they listened to in their car during their week. Men want to **ACCOMPLISH** something spiritually and the convenience of a tiny group makes them feel successful and fuels that need for accomplishment.

Matthew 11:28 You will find rest for your souls.

SIGN ME UP

If you already know whom you want to do a tiny group with- as well as your topic- **GO FOR IT!** Please sign up at the back table in the sanctuary so we can have a record of your tiny group, and use the checklist on the last page for everything else. You're all set.

If you are willing to do a tiny group with **ANYONE** at Solid Rock, we would love to set you up with some new friends. You can have 2 other ladies or guys, or another couple- in your group.

There is a sign up sheet on the back table in the sanctuary. Fill in your name, number, and check the boxes that apply to your tiny group needs- then one of our amazing leaders will "hook you up" by the following Sunday.

If you have any questions, there will always be someone next to the back table in the sanctuary before and after each service.

Every tiny group that you are a part of will bring you one step closer to hearing Jesus say "Well done!"

BEST TOPICS TO USE:

Any of PJP's series are great- because:

- *If they are visiting or attending SRM, then they are used to PJP's voice/message style.
- *You've already heard it and they are easy to talk about.
- *They are between 2-6 sermons at 30 min each. You can easily listen to one sermon a day during your drive time.

Some of PJP's series:

Core Value series, Financial Counseling,
Preparing for Promotion, DISCover yourself
Let the Past Be the Past, Living Confident,
Verbal Blessings, Relationship vs. Religion,
FRIENDS, I'm Dead, Now What? (Heaven and Hell),
Enjoy life, Don't Be Negative, Obedience
(generational blessings and curses)
Teach me to Pray, Dreams Come True.

- Will this series help someone with marriage issues?
 - Will this series help a new Christian?
 - Will this series help a mature Christian?
 - Will this series help facilitate good conversation?
 - Will this series help someone who is struggling at work?
 - Will this series help someone who is struggling as a parent?
 - Will this series help ME?
- The answer to all of those questions is, YES!

We have many more GREAT series by other speakers such as:

Pastor John Fichtner (PJP's coach) Robert Morris, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Creflo Dollar, and others...

We have several short books: The Power of Money, It's not MY fault-LOL, Rock Solid Leadership, and more... (By PJP)
Books on CD: Dinner with a Perfect Stranger, The 5 Love Languages, and more...

The topic you choose is important, but it's more important to ask these questions:

1. Is this a teaching from the Word of God?
2. Is it easy to understand, talk about, and apply to my life?
3. Can God clearly speak to me though this teaching?

CHECKLIST

- *Has EVERYONE agreed who will be the facilitator?
- *Has EVERYONE agreed on what series they will be listening to and which CD's they will listen to BEFORE each meeting?
- *Does EVERYONE have a copy of the CDs?
- *Has EVERYONE verbalized where and when they will listen to the CDs? (car, computer, lunch break, while exercising, etc)
- *Has EVERYONE agreed to LAUGH and have fun above everything else?
- *Has EVERYONE agreed not to give advice unless asked?
- *Has EVERYONE agreed that both meetings will be less than an hour each?
- *Has EVERYONE agreed on where and when they will meet?

*Has EVERYONE agreed to share: 1 prayer request, 1 praise report, and 1 thing they liked about the CDs?

*Has EVERYONE agreed to sit together in church for the two weeks of the tiny group?