

THE NUMBER ONE REASON TO BELONG TO A SMALL GROUP

Part 1 of Belong. Galatians 6:1-2.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. September 1, 2024.

THE CORNERSTONE BEGAN AS A SMALL GROUP

GALATIANS 6:1-2

Galatians 6:1-2 (CSB) Brothers and sisters, if someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual, restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so that you also won't be tempted. 2 Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

THE NUMBER ONE REASON TO BELONG TO A SMALL GROUP

Small groups offer many benefits:

- Prayer, Bible study, friendship, food.

But the most important benefit is:

- When you hit the wall, you have someone to call.

THREE INSIGHTS RELATED TO SMALL GROUPS

Insight 1: We all hit the wall.

“If someone is overtaken in any wrongdoing” - verse 1.

- “Overtaken” paints a picture of being suddenly ambushed by temptation.
- The broader idea refers to any kind of life challenge we face.
- We all hit the wall one time or another, and we need help.

Insight 2: Your small group can help when you hit the wall.

“Restore such a person” - verse 1.

“Carry one another’s burdens” - verse 2.

Restore

- “Restore” is used in the New Testament to describe setting a broken bone or repairing a fishing net.
- We need help straightening out what is broken: a friend to stand by our side, speak Jesus and gospel promises, support us through the storm.
- “Spiritual” people should do the restoring; people filled with the Holy Spirit and his fruit of love, joy, etc.
- “Gentle” people do not bully the broken. They come alongside and help.

Carry Burdens

- A burden is a heavy load someone carries a long distance.
- It’s a biblical metaphor for experiencing a challenge we cannot handle alone.
- Small groups carry burdens in various ways: from hugs to advice to meals to appliance repair to help moving house to help finding a job.

Insight 3: When your small group helps you, the impact ripples out.

“Carry one another’s burdens; in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ” - verse 2.

- The “law of Christ” is the totality of his teachings, and the new commandment he gave his disciples:

John 13:34-35 (CSB) I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 15:12; 1 John 3:23).

- His sacrificial love atoned for our sins and restored us to God.
- Small groups allow us to love as Jesus loved, and to be loved as Jesus loved?
- When we love like that, it ripples out. People see and believe that we follow Jesus, and he gets glory and gratitude.

JOIN A SMALL GROUP TODAY

A list of groups is available at the Welcome Center.

- Find a group that feels right for you.
- Contact the contact person.
- Join the group.

When you hit the wall, who are you going to call?

BENEFITS OF SMALL GROUPS

With assistance from Perplexity.ai

- **Stronger Relationships:** Participants often develop closer relationships, fostering a sense of community and belonging[2].
- **Spiritual Growth:** Members explore their faith more deeply through discussions, prayer, and study of the Bible.[2][3].
- **Accountability:** Members hold each other accountable for their spiritual and personal goals, providing support to make changes in their lives[1][2][3].
- **Utilization of Gifts:** Participants use their gifts to serve and support one another, promoting a culture of mutual ministry within the church[1][2].
- **Increased Participation:** People are more likely to participate actively in discussions and activities in small groups[1].
- **Support During Difficult Times:** Small groups provide a network of support for facing challenges, offering prayer, encouragement, and practical help[2][4].
- **Leadership Development*:** These groups serve as a training ground for developing leaders, allowing members to take on roles that enhance their skills and confidence[3][4].
- **Community Outreach:** Small groups can effectively reach out to non-believers and invite them into a welcoming environment, facilitating evangelism in a more personal manner[2][3].
- **Care and Connection:** They create a system for genuine care, ensuring that members' needs are known and addressed[3].

Citations:

[1]www.dougbrittonbooks.com/onlinebiblestudies-smallgroupsandcellgroups/benefitsofchurchsmallgroupsstudy/

[2]churchsource.com/blogs/ministry-resources/five-reasons-your-church-needs-a-small-group-ministry

[3]www.markhowelllive.com/10-powerful-benefits-of-a-thriving-small-group-ministry/

[4]daintyjewells.com/blog/church-small-group-ideas