

The Transformative Power of Relationships

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. Acts 2:42-47 NIV

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. 1 John 1:5-10 NIV

1. We have tended to underplay the spiritual value of relationships and overplay the value of sermons.

We have tended to minimize the value of relationships. As a youth pastor, generally people wanted to know that their kids had heard a sermon whenever they were together. This legitimized bit the YP and the meeting. The fun and games were merely “bait”.

(Moncton epiphany ... kids who didn't want the sermon could disrupt it enough to make me an ogre and distort what I was trying to do by altering my tone).

- Took away the bait.
- Took away the audience.
- Decided to reach them through play

I discovered that effective ministry looks different to different people.

2. Discipleship is extended relationship, not curricula.

Genuine faith in Christ is **more caught than taught**. More people come to Christ through a relationship than a sermon. The sermon may be the final piece that puts things in place but only because there is some relationship that has created the readiness.

3. Commonality ... A core ingredient of discipleship

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. **All the believers were together and had everything in common**. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. **And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.**” (Acts 2:42–47, NIV84)

The greater the degree of commonality, the greater the connection.

Koinos = common, ordinary, every day

Koinonia – sharing what is common, ordinary, every day

Four Types of Connecting Points

I see four major categories of fellowship groups that people could be involved in based on their gifts, abilities and interests.

- ***The Focus Group ...*** people who come together with a common focus

- ***The Interest Group ...*** people who come together with a common interest.

- ***The Project Group ...*** people who come together with a common project

- ***The Need Group ...*** people who come together with a common need.