

June 2009

New Life Family Matters

A word from Pastor Dave...

What's in a Word?

Home Groups or Home Churches

"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. ...But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be." 1Cor. 12:4-6; 18-19 NIV

For some time now our full time staff has been operating out of the Biblical paradigm I just mentioned from 1 Corinthians. We believe that every member of Jesus' Body has been given "gifts" or talents by Him at conception for use in serving others. We are now seeking to honor Jesus and His "called out ones" (a definition of church) by facilitating ministry through them to others instead of trying to do it all ourselves. Wow. Jesus loves this way of thinking and operating. He is calling us to release ministry into the hands of those He has "graced" to do a particular area of service. One of our New Life core values is that small intimate meetings of Jesus' Church are essential for consistent, sustainable growth in our Christian walk. We have traditionally called these meetings, "Life Groups." Using the acronym, L.I.F.E., Life Groups are living laboratories on how to LOVE and be loved. They are meant to provide INSTRUCTION from God's Word. FELLOWSHIP and its benefits are enjoyed. Group efforts at reaching out to others (EVANGELISM) are accomplished. Love, Instruction, Fellowship & Evangelism: these are the key nutrients of the Christian Life and are the objectives for our LIFE Groups.

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Not long ago I did a short series on Sunday mornings about Jesus' Church. As I studied to prepare these messages, I sensed Jesus beginning to help me "see" that our small group meetings should be "viewed" as small meetings of His Church, not group meetings. That these meetings are His ordained "modus operandi" for His Church to experience His Word come alive in and through the "shared life" of Jesus among us. Renaming them "church" gives the emphasis and honor that is due these meetings. Coming "together" is His directive (Heb 10:24-25) and our corporate "act of faith" that honors Him, His Word and each "member" of Jesus' Body. He told us that ***"he has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."*** When we gather together in Home Church meetings, we are honoring "one another" and Jesus' placement of people in our lives for the mutual building up of one

another. When we gather in Home Church meetings we get to expect our Master to show up among us and minister His Word to everyone present so that everyone leaves the meeting encouraged, comforted, challenged and equipped to live life as He envisioned it for us (John 10:10).

So, is this just a change of a name? I don't believe so; I believe that Jesus is signifying to us as a Church Family that there are great benefits yet to be enjoyed in Home Church Meetings. As we begin to "see" them not as an optional, "tag-on-when-we-can" group meeting, but rather as an opportunity to experience the abundant life He has promised, we will be honoring Jesus and the Members of His Body. I sense life transformation awaits us in our Home Church Meetings. Let's set our hearts to gather joyfully and expectantly as He directed His Church in Acts 1 & 2. Sounds like exciting stuff ahead for His Church.