

All Different Parts

Utilizing the Body of Christ in your small group

Matt Graybill | posted 6/28/2010

Usually I know my way around home improvement stores, but I couldn't find the one-switch, two-outlet plate covering that I was looking for. After wandering around for 15 minutes I decided to press the little "need help" button. I waited for a while before an employee came to stop the repeated announcement. I explained what I was looking for, and he replied, "I don't work in this department, sorry." Then he just left.

Wow, what customer service!

That's why I'm thankful to be in a small group where all of the people don't "work in the same department." I love having a group of people working with me that are able to meet a wide variety of needs.

Diversity Is Better

As a small-groups pastor, I often receive requests like this: "I need a group that's for people who are five-foot-tall, left handed, and that grew up in Dellview, North Carolina." Well, maybe not that specific. But many times people want to be in a small group that looks just like them.

Here's the problem with that line of thinking, though: when you surround yourself with people like you, you surround yourself with people who have the same weaknesses as you. And you deprive yourself of some great opportunities for assistance and growth. I mean, what if you're in a group full of five-foot-tall people and you need something on the top shelf?

The beauty of the body of Christ is that we're all different, and our strengths and gifts are designed to serve each other—and others outside of our group. A single mom can be served by a couple that can watch her kids and let her go Christmas shopping. A person with the gift of hospitality can host a small group in their home. An encouraging person can send a "I'm thinking of you" card after hearing about the loss of a loved one. Parents who have older children can say to the young parents, "Oh, no need to worry about that; it's just a phase."

You get the idea. Being in a group with people who don't look, think, and behave exactly like you allows you to serve the needs of others. It also allows the group to serve your needs.

Do Something

This month, try to maximize the different gifts and talents in your small group by doing something together. Something challenging and important; something that advances the Kingdom of God.

Find a service project that you can do as a group, and you'll begin to see how different your group members are as you work together. Rejoice in this! And leaders, remember that you don't have to do it all—delegate to each person's strength within your group.

In addition, be open to others joining your group that look, think, and behave differently than you. Many churches and organizations have groups that are for a specific type of person—married, younger, older, men, women—and that can be a great thing. But don't limit your groups to just that. Think about the group Jesus was in. It wasn't all made up entirely of fishermen, right. Allow your group to function as a community where each person's strengths can serve the others.

"The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves, and some are free. But we have all been baptized into one body by one Spirit, and we all share the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).

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