

Being the Body-of-Christ “on-site”: how to begin

Micro-clusters of friends (and their unreached relationships) can become a life changing “*where-they-live*” Body-of-Christ!

Don’t skip lightly over the Biblical ideas in this paragraph. Ask God to arrange encounters between you and the friends/acquaintances/strangers in whom He has been stirring up a deep spiritual yearning. This only happens through your praying & God’s connecting you to the persons HE already sees! Pray about this everyday for 7 days. If no connections arise then have an hour long retreat with God...read Acts 16:7-14...Lydia was a worshiper but not yet a Christ-follower...God knew how to connect Paul and her...ask Him to connect you with someone like that...the not-yet-Christian who is probably already looking “toward” God....watch for the “Lydias”. Though a few Christ-followers might become the core of the group, don’t let this become just a cozy club of Christians. Keep praying and sharing with whomever He brings your way until some are ready to journey with you in this group...it only takes a few. Trust His Spirit to connect you to the right ones, and to have their hearts open. Don’t be overly anxious and substitute events to draw a crowd...just wait on HIM to connect you to the God-hungry persons! Their circle of relationships will be what draws more persons in!

1. Gather at a home, apartment, park, café, etc.... wherever the group will participate.
2. Seek to be a fully functioning Body of Christ at the very first gathering. Without using “churchy terms” you can guide the group to experience the 5 basics of church life (see “practical ideas” below).
3. At every gathering ask God to continue arranging encounters between current participants and others in whom He has created a heart hunger for the person of Christ. **Always be authentic, never false**, in caring for another person. Be sensitive to their needs. Never manipulate. Include and value each one.
4. Personally pray for God to **raise up an “intern”** who will work with you and reproduce the gathering in another group. Also, seek out a “Paul” who will give you on-going wise counsel as you lead this group.

Practical ideas for the basic functions or rhythms of the Body-of-Christ

1. **supportive friendships**...share life concerns and pray for each other (perhaps silently if some prefer). Take turns telling (a) what the world has been dumping on you this week, and (b) where you have seen God at work this week, or what He has been doing in your life. “Be there” for one another in the ups and downs of everyday living. Try this over a simple meal.
2. **authentic worship**...focus on God’s greatness using any combination of a. music/guitar/CD/video), b. art, c. silence/awe, d. nature, e. sharing about God’s greatness in your life , f. scripture promises, etc.
3. **obedience-based discipleship**...apply a Bible passage to how you live. As a group dialogue over what it says about (a) God, (b) self, (c) others, (d) life. Pick practical scriptures like: Psalms, Matt. 5-7, John 8, Gal. 6, Philippians, or James. The leader needs to guide, but not dominate the dialogue...just keep it on track .
4. **life-involvement evangelism**...include not-yet-Christians fully and naturally, and allow them to hear/see how Christ is working in the lives of those present. Nurture everyone toward expressing their own “journey-with-God” during the gathering and in genuine relationships. Let people be drawn to God by all they hear and experience in the group...some are drawn toward becoming Christ-followers as they experience the fellowship of doing a servanthood project together and the joy of making a difference for others in the world! They become open to hearing how they can trust and follow Christ with their whole life!
5. **servanthood caring**...seek opportunities to help others like Christ would (Matt. 25:35-36). Do a mission project. Help someone in a life crisis. Take a weekly offering (always let “giving” be an act of worship)... have the group decide on how to collect and use their gifts in meeting someone’s need..let them deliver it!

Biblical Model: Romans 16:3-5...the Prisca & Aquilla expression of basic church life

- ~ How did they make a living? (Acts 18:3) How big was their house? What was the furniture like?
- ~ How many people fit in their home? How did they Worship? Disciple people? Evangelize? Do Ministry for others? Have Community together? ...all very basic and elemental, but still a simple expression of church!
- ~ How was their leader prepared? (2 Tim. 2:2) Who gave them permission to transform their neighborhood by planting a simple but sincere expression of church there?
- ~ What did they do with their offerings? How much did the gathering cost? How big did it get?
 - ~ How long did this specific expression of church last in this location? How much good did it do?
Relational/Powerful/Contagious!