WHY SMALL GROUPS? (Priority #2)

"Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, in our likeness….' So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them."
(Genesis 1:26-27)

Why do healthy, growing churches emphasize small groups?

- ***We (Christians) worship a small group***

- ***We (humans) need small groups***

- ***We all benefit from small groups***

- **Will we reflect the SG image of God in our MJCOG programs?**

MJCOG—10.30.16 Ted Ewing, PhD

QUOTES OF NOTE

I have been at the bedside of many people in their final moments, when they stand on the edge of eternity, and I have never heard anyone say, 'Bring me my diplomas! I want to look at them one more time. Show me my awards, my medals, that gold watch I was given.' When life on earth is ending, people don't surround themselves with objects. What we want around us is people—people we love and have relationships with. In our final moments, we all realize that relationships are what life is all about. Wisdom is learning that truth sooner rather than later. (Rick Warren, *The Purpose-Driven Life*)

The small group is a generic form of human community that is trans-cultural, trans-generational and even transcendent. The call to human gathering in groups is a God-centered (ontological) and God-directed (theological) ministry, birthed out of the very nature and purpose of God's being. God as Being exists in community. The natural and simple demonstration of God's communal image for humanity is the gathering of the small group. (Gareth Icenogle, *Biblical Foundations for Small Group Ministry*)

The aim of God in history is the creation of an all-inclusive community of loving persons, with himself included in that community as its prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. (Dallas Willard, *Studies in the Book of Apostolic Acts*)

The surest thing I took away from my BSW, MSW, and Ph.D. in social work is this: connection is why we're here. We are hardwired to connect with others, it's what gives purpose and meaning to our lives, and without it there is suffering. (Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*)

As surely as birds were made to fly and fish to swim, we were made for community, for the kind of community the Trinity enjoys, for spiritual community. And to the degree we experience it, we change, we grow, we heal. (Larry Crabb, *The Safest Place on Earth*)

When I ask students from non-Christian homes what brought them into relationships with Jesus, the top responses involve community. Whether they're invited to youth group by a believing friend, or stumbling into Christian community on their own, most students I ask confirm that relationships with others serve as a precursor to a relationship with God. (Kara Powell, quoted in *Postmodern Youth Ministry*)

In the postmodern world, worship is no longer the front door. Relationship—honest, mutual relationship (and usually way outside our worship space) is the new front door. (Sally Morgenthaler, quoted in *Postmodern Youth Ministry)*