



MentorNet #66

WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED

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Jesus promised: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.” (Matt. 18:20) If you mentor those who multiply new gatherings and those who shepherd them, then you understand the importance of this basic unit of the living Body of Christ on earth. You can help your trainees plan, form and multiply many tiny gatherings as part of a bigger congregation.

What they can do

Little gatherings of two, three or more, prove entire capable of fulfilling many, biblical requirements of an authentic body. However little gatherings may be, they can:

- experience the Presence of Christ (see www.MentorNet.ws, #56^{*})
- obey, together, all Jesus’ basic commandments (believe, baptize, love, pray, share, praise, commune, give, make disciples...)
- exercise spiritual gifts (evangelize, prophesy, exhort, teach, show mercy...)
- edify one another with loving interaction, practicing the biblical “one another” commands
- persevere through time, trials and persecution
- reproduce by adding members and forming new gatherings

Other advantages

The littlest of gatherings enjoy certain strengths and advantages that prove difficult for bigger congregations. Consider these:

- quick growth, easily doubling in only a few day’s time
- starting and thriving without budgets, benches, bells, banners
- a married couple worshiping with their children or servants
- easily moving location according to needs or convenience
- quickly learning from mistakes and make needed changes
- providing discipleship for seekers and new believers
- opportunity for new leaders to gain experience
- avoiding being bullied by oppressive laws and hostile authorities

Two or three of whom?

The New Testament provides examples of many small gatherings, some of them consisting, at least temporarily, of two or three individuals. These include one individual sharing with another (a couple from Emmaus), newly-saved households (a Philippian jailor), home-based gatherings (Lydia’s house), apostolic teams (Paul and Silas), those praying for restoration (Matt. 18:19-20), training leaders (Priscilla and Aquila with Apollos). Thus, the two or three may

^{*} Or <http://acquirewisdom.com/mentornet/mentornet-56-let-believers-experience-the-presence-of-christ-in-their-gatherings/>.

consist of individuals, evangelists, married couples, heads of households, team mates, military personnel, students on campus, friends at coffeehouses, and so forth.

Basic unit of all growth

A silent reality of all social groups, including congregations, missionary bands, house gatherings and discipleship groups, is that they grow mostly in units of two or three. That is, every one or two believers finds another; every one or two couples seeks a third; every one or two shepherds seeks to train up a new one.

Shepherds, missionaries and trainers can enhance groups, both quantitatively in numbers and qualitatively in maturity, by paying attention to this basic pattern. Of course, this is not a matter of mathematical precision, but of simply working together on a micro-level to win folk to Christ and to disciple them in a normal, effective and reproductive way.

$$\begin{aligned}1 + 1 &= 2 \\2 + 1 &= 3 \\3 + 1 &= 2 + 2 \\2 + 2 + 1 &= 3 + 2 \\3 + 2 + 1 &= 2 + 2 + 2 \\&et\ cetera\end{aligned}$$

Every believer seeks to win a friend, every couple finds another couple, and every shepherd appoints an apprentice. Next, every two friends win a third, or every two couples seek a third couple, every two shepherds appoint a third. Each of these “triads” seeks another individual, another couple, another shepherd, until they are four and can become two pairs of individuals, two pairs of couples, two pairs of shepherds. Thereafter, every pair, again, seeks another.

A tactic for reproduction

You can help your mentees plan to match every believer or believing couple with another believer or believing couple, for purposes of mutual encouragement. Such matching can happen during cellular or congregational gatherings, or between gatherings. Instruct every pair to pray and ask God to bring them a third believer or couple. The three will then pray and ask God to bring a fourth. When the fourth has come, these will form a new pair of two individuals or two couples who will pray and ask God for a third believer or a third couple.

Each of you mentors should pray and ask God for an apprentice mentor, and the two of you should pray and ask God for another apprentice mentor, then a fourth. Soon you will be two pairs of mentors, praying and asking God for yet another. This will continue until the Lord Jesus be revealed from heaven with power and glory.

Resources

Order P. O'Connor, *Reproducible Pastoral Training*, from a bookshop or at <www.WCLbooks.com>.

Download free CP training software, “*Come, Let Us Disciple the Nations*,” from <www.Paul-Timothy.net/dn/>.

Download free mentoring tools and materials for new leaders from <www.MentorAndMultiply.com>.

Find the *Train & Multiply*[®] church planting and pastoral training course at <www.TrainAndMultiply.com>.

Order G. Patterson’s *Church Multiplication Guide* from a bookshop or at <www.WCLbooks.com>.

Download pastoral mentoring studies and children’s studies from <www.Paul-Timothy.net>.

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