

LIFE Group Leader Handout

January 21, 2018

Got Thirst?

Pastor Mike O'Connor

Scripture--I Corinthians 3:5-9

5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor. 9 For we are God's fellow workers. You are God's field, God's building.

Main Idea--God Desires Spiritual Growth; Thirst for God Moves to to Desire That

2018 is The Year of Growing--

- It is God who causes growth
- He desires our cooperation

As God calls us, there are two common pathways off of the King's Highway--

- A world we can control--"I don't need God."
- An Unfailing Source of Pleasure--"I don't trust God."

God is not anti-pleasure--quite the opposite. He made us with desires. The plan of the enemy is to get us seeking the gift rather than worshipping the giver of all good gifts.

If we are no longer thirsty, there are ways to get our thirst back. (see reverse).

Application--

- Which of the common detours is most likely to be your challenge--"a world I can control" of "an unfailing source of pleasure"?
- How do you see thirst for God as an antidote to wandering off the pathway God is calling us to follow?
- Which of the ways of recovering thirst for God is most important to you right now and how are you implementing it?

6 Ways You Can Stir Up Hunger & Thirst for God

1. MISS IT

'I have come to realize that the real tragedy in the church is not spiritual famine: it is famine without hunger, dryness without thirst.' Helen Calder

2. PRAY FOR IT

Even the desire to seek God is a gift from Him (John 6:44). When we pray for spiritual hunger, we are praying in accordance with God's will. He wants us to be hungry for Him. (Matthew 5:6). It is a prayer God loves to answer.

3. RECALL IT

Jesus told the Ephesian church, '*You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen*' (Revelation 2:4-5)

You can stir up a desire for God by remembering a time when you were pursuing God and experiencing intimacy in your life with Him.

4. CATCH IT

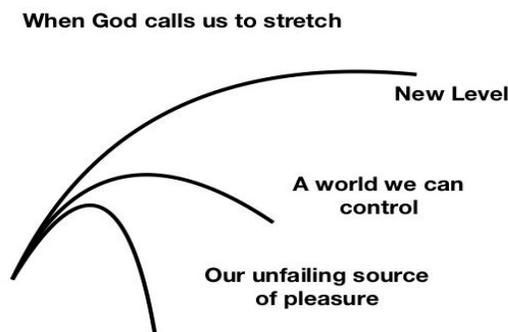
Spiritual hunger is contagious. Get around hungry people, or people who are further on in the journey than you. *The Lord's People in the Lord's House on the Lord's Day.* Enthusiastically participate in your LIFE Group.

5. HEAR IT

Worship can help impart hunger to you.

6. ACT ON IT

'Taste and see that the Lord is good.' Ps 34:8 With the little sense of need that you have, pursue God. You will learn that the more you encounter His presence, the more you will hunger for more. You will discover that no matter how much you long for God, and how much you hunger for Him, His desire for you is greater.



FINDING TRUE FELLOWSHIP

By Steve Gladen

Fellowship is a misunderstood purpose of small-group ministry. People often think they're enjoying fellowship together, when actually they're only experiencing a small part of what fellowship is meant to be. Too often, the parts that are missing are the elements of true community. And Christian community is what provides the strong foundation for living out all the other purposes of the church:

- **True community fosters discipleship.** That's because when the people in your small groups experience open, honest relationships together, they have an easier time asking hard questions and challenging each other to grow.
- **True community fosters ministry.** That's because when we care about one another and we know one another's needs, it's easier to put love into action. We don't hesitate to help.
- **True community fosters evangelism.** When we know that a small group member is hurting over loved ones who don't know Christ yet, we're more able--and more motivated--to pray for them to be saved.
- **True community fosters worship.** Those who experience genuine community and unconditional love with one another are willing to be more vulnerable. This includes honesty in worship. When we are part of true community, we're apt to talk more openly to our friends and to surrender ourselves more freely to God.

The Bible offers its own reasons why Christian fellowship is so important. For instance, Hebrews 10:24-25 says: "Think of ways to encourage one another to outbursts of love and good deeds. And let us not neglect our meeting together as some people do. But encourage and warn each other, especially now that the day of his coming back again is drawing near."

Genuine fellowship helps us move from just sharing coffee and cookies to being a safe community where we can be transparent with one another. Here are some simple but effective steps a small group can take to build this kind of fellowship and encourage genuine community.

- **Offer new people a history of the group.** Have everyone--including first-timers--share a little bit about their family and a few of the activities they enjoy doing in their free time.
- **Provide icebreakers.** Sometimes the silliest questions or activities are best. These help people get to know one another in a safe way.
- **Celebrate milestones and victories.** Help foster community by celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, long-awaited adoptions, and other special events. Also, celebrate spiritual victories and answers to prayer.
- **Tell stories.** Plan a brief activity that encourages face-to-face interaction between members. This could be as simple as letting people share a story from the heart, such as when they got saved or engaged or married. It could also be a time of sharing a personal story that is relevant to the study. When people share about their personal stories, community deepens.
- **Print a directory.** A group roster is a simple but important tool for building fellowship and fostering community. Make it easy for people to connect outside of group time by sharing email addresses and phone numbers.

Fellowship shouldn't be superficial or shallow. When genuine Christian fellowship offers a safe context for knowing and being known, community will result.