

Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another... (Hebrews 10:25)

CONNECTIONS

Small Groups @ NSCBC

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CONNECTIONS

This newsletter, published 3-4 times a year, is designed specifically for small group leaders at North Shore Community Baptist Church. We hope these editions will be informative and supportive to you in your ministry as small group leaders. We welcome your feedback, ideas, and suggestions about how we can better serve, support, and equip you. Feel free to share your thoughts with us!

Savoring His Observable Presence

Reflections of a Small Group Leader

- by Janet McKay

Well, it's coming up on a year for me. The first study I facilitated was supposed to be my only study. I'm now half way through my third, and most days I can still hardly believe it. God clearly can use anyone, even if they have a lot of growing to do. I finally believe that! In fact, I've been doing a lot of believing God lately.

Shortly before last summer, I can point to several incidents where God was clearly drawing me more closely to Himself. Then He laid before me a resource to study, and I decided to invite some other women to join me. I had no idea what was in store, and it dawned on me about a week before the study began that I would actually have to do some facilitating. Ha! I frantically called my sister in Indianapolis, who has been involved in many Bible studies, and asked her what to do. She shared with me some great wisdom based on her good and bad experiences through the years. What a relief to have some guidance...Wow, you mean God equips, too?

The best part of facilitating these studies is this: I'm actually seeing God work, more than ever before. And I'm not the only one. I've had some fantastic discussions with the women who come on Sunday nights who have shared amazing stories of their GodSTOPS (Savoring The Observable Presence). What a privilege! The accountability afforded by meeting together weekly, as well as the opportunity to pray for others and be prayed for during the week, has been the glue that holds me to this course. Also, I am growing to love women that I've only known peripherally for years. And another bonus: my neighbors are getting really curious about the "parties" we have at our house every Sunday. Boy oh boy, I get excited (and a little nervous) to think what God could do with that!

Many Sundays in church, I just shake my head with amazement at how the sermons so often directly speak to what we're learning that week. It has happened so much, I should just expect it, but I'm still usually stunned when it happens. Well, it's happening again, only this time I had advanced notice. It turns out that I'm scheduled to sing this week at church. The sermon title? "A Lesson in Christian Vigilance." My song title? "Runner." The title of this week's small group lesson when I opened the book a couple days ago? Drum roll please...."Run with Endurance."

Shaking my head and savoring His observable presence,

Janet

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SG Leadership Team Transitions

Brian and Kerrie James, who have faithfully served for the past several months as members of the SG Leadership Team (and have led small groups of their own) will soon be heading to Detroit where they will be involved in an inner-city church plant. Though we are sad to see them depart and will greatly miss the giftedness they have contributed at NSCBC, we trust that they are obediently following the Lord's leading and we rejoice with them as they enter this new chapter of their lives. Please join us in praying that God will richly bless and empower them for further service in His kingdom.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Lianna Sours to the SG Leadership Team. Lianna has already been partnering with us as a liaison for outreach opportunities, but she now comes on board as a full-fledged member of our team! She brings many gifts and strengths which we trust will only further enhance our ministry together. Please join us in welcoming her onboard!

Below you will find some "parting words" from Brian and Kerrie, as well as a brief introduction of Lianna.

We have been so honored and overjoyed to be part of the small group leadership team over the past months. It has been a time of rich thinking, praying, and seeking God's will for a church we love deeply. The unity of purpose and enthusiasm we have seen from the small groups of North Shore has been an amazing encouragement, but this is only the very first step. What an exciting journey you all have ahead of you! God wants to bring a new and ever more resilient faith to your lives, and we believe personal discipleship and small groups will be powerful tools to bring this about.

We really own this vision. It is the very foundation of the church plant we are joining in Detroit. We hope to raise up a community that is defined by intimacy and growth. We want to see that city changed drastically, and no generic program or man-made business tactics will achieve this goal. It will only happen through the initiation of the Holy Spirit, and through Christ-like nurturing. Whether in Detroit or New England, may those who love Jesus feed his sheep!

Brian and Kerrie James



Lianna Sours lives in Beverly, MA but grew up in Philadelphia, PA where most of her family still resides. She works for the *Seven Hills Foundation*, providing information, referral and funding for families who have children with disabilities. Lianna was a part of a small group at NSCBC for 5 years and now leads a group of 9th grade girls. She is also active on NSCBC's *J-Team* (local outreach ministry) and is passionate about connecting individuals and small groups to outreach opportunities.

LEADERSHIP ORIENTATION:

small groups...



BIG IMPACT!

COMING THIS FALL!

stay tuned...you won't want to miss it!

Huddle Up!

Small Group Leader Huddles: What Are They and Why Do We Have Them?

- Franco Curotto

As we move into this new and exciting time of seeing small groups thrive at NSCBC, you will begin to hear the Small Group Leadership Team talk about small group "huddles". At first it may seem like we're talking more about playing football than about leading people to a growing relationship with Christ. But in actuality the term "huddle" is used to refer to leaders connecting with one another for more focused training and discussion about what is currently happening in their group life. Each member of the Leadership Team is considered a "coach" and is responsible for providing support and encouragement to a specific huddle group. You will see the groupings in the chart below.

The goal of our groups is for life change to happen through an intimate relationship with Christ & one another. We all need to stay connected to one another so we can be aware of things that take us off the path to this goal. The quality and direction of our groups is directly impacted by the health of our leaders. So how do we know if we're on track? How can we be sure our groups are headed in a healthy direction? How do we ensure that we ourselves are healthy and balanced?

This is where small group leader huddles can be such a tremendous resource. These gatherings provide space for leaders to share with one another what is going on in their own lives and in their group life. This is an opportunity for us to encourage and support one another as we walk together. Huddles create connections so that leaders realize they are a part of a greater network of folks who are serving the Lord in similar ways.

We will be contacting you in the coming months and inviting you to a small group huddle gathering. This is a groundbreaking opportunity at NSCBC and we hope that you will be as excited as we are to share in this time together. We pray that the relationships formed through these huddles will be an increasingly valuable resource to you in your life and ministry. What a blessing it is to be serving the Lord together!



Small Groups
~ North Shore Community Baptist Church ~

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www.nscbc.org

***The Small Group Ministry,
through God's provision of power and wisdom in the Holy Spirit,
exists to create opportunities
for discipleship, community, and outreach
as biblical ways of magnifying the name of Jesus Christ.***

Healthy small groups are consistently pursuing growth in the following three vital relationships:

Discipleship

Maturing followers are continually pursuing an intimate relationship with God through Christ.

Community

Maturing believers are growing in community with other believers through spending time together, encouraging one another, and supporting one another.

Outreach

Maturing believers are reaching out to embrace people with grace and truth so that they also might have an intimate relationship with God through Christ.

The Multiplication Method

Gathering Together to Expand Outward

- Kristin Gelinas

Have you ever considered how different things would be if Jesus Christ had not invested his life in the twelve disciples? After his time on earth, Jesus returned to his Father confident that his work would continue pressing forward through the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of His followers. He had steadfastly and faithfully imparted the vision of the kingdom of God into the hearts of the men of this small group, trusting that they would then reproduce this vision in the lives of others. Indeed, as the first century progressed, we see these original followers of Jesus meeting together in small groups. Even more importantly, we saw the church expanding exponentially! Look at the portrait of the early Christian church painted in the Book of Acts:

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47)

This principle of multiplication has been advancing the kingdom ever since, as followers of Jesus gather together and invite others into that fellowship. As believers invest their lives in others, pouring out the vision and life of Christ, the kingdom of God expands. As a small group leader who attends a little church in a little corner of New England, YOU are a part of this ongoing work! In his book The Master Plan of Discipleship, Robert Coleman says, "It does not matter how small the group is at the beginning, provided that they implant their vision in men and women who will in turn pass the word along to others, and that they also reproduce. The early church gave eloquent witness to the dynamic in the hearts of people who take God at His Word and believe that with Him nothing is impossible".

May we be these kind of people—for the sake of God's glory in His ever-expanding kingdom!