

Group Dynamics - Part 2

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Introduction.

A. The greatest unresolved problem in the church today is unemployment.

1. We need leadership that can develop its members.
2. Why is there a shortage of personnel?
3. God calls churches into existence and wants it to succeed.
4. God dispenses gifts but the church is not developing gifts.
5. Satan fogs us in the area of the crucial, not trivial. He has fogged us in the area of spiritual gifts.
6. The early church in Acts had some that did not even know of the Holy Spirit.
7. Many of us don't know what our spiritual gifts are.

B. Our great need is to return to the truth. (Ephesians 4)

1. Ephesians tells how to live a heavenly life in a hell-like world.
2. The first three chapters describe the believer's wealth.
3. Chapter four addresses the believer's walk in the midst of warfare.
4. The first section deals with our calling; the final section deals with our conduct.
5. The section on the believer's walk is loaded with emphasis on spiritual gifts.
6. Some insist that doctrine is the important thing regarding conduct, but it isn't true.
7. Paul wants us to walk worthily—to have equal weight with. (Ephesians 4)
 - a. Our conduct should have equal weight with our calling.
 - b. We are to be as obsessed with doing the truth as with knowing it.
 - c. Our walk is to be with meekness and lowliness, bearing with each other in love.
 - d. Notice Paul doesn't emphasize Bible study or even individual witnessing.
 - e. He emphasizes interpersonal relational aspects.
 - f. Next he states that God gives gifts to men and gifted men to the church.

I. Spiritual gifts.

A. I want to deal with spiritual gifts in Ephesians. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

1. Verse 11 summarizes the first section dealing with the dispensing of gifts.

- a. There are four gifts here, other lists complement this list. (1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12)
- b. The gifts emphasized here deal with leadership in the church such as the pastor/teacher gift.

2. Verse 12 deals with the development of these gifts.

a. There are three major dependent clauses here.

1. Equipping deals with the process of developing gifts. Gifted men equip the saints.
2. The work of the ministry and the building up of the body of Christ are two additional dependent clauses indicating that every believer has a ministry.

a. Equipping is a fishing term speaking of mending broken nets.

b. Equipping can also be a medical term as in fixing broken bones.

c. Equipping can also be a nautical term referring to the outfitting of a ship for a journey.

d. Navigators are equippers of the believers, mending broken nets, fixing broken bones, and outfitting ships for sail.

e. A ministry of addition does the work of ministry; a ministry of multiplication equips others for their ministry.

f. Most pastors are involved in addition ministries.

g. John Bright said, "The purpose of a seminary is to unfit men for the ministry as conceived by the churches today."

h. The coach of Oklahoma said football contributes nothing to physical fitness; it's 22 men in need of recreation and 40,000 people in the stands in need of exercise.

i. The church is similar; a few people doing ministry and many watching.

j. A church in Dallas revealed a layman with 8 full-time ministry jobs and many doing nothing.

k. We need to pay ministers not to do our ministry but to equip the people to do their ministries.

l. Ministers need to apply the principles of Ephesians 4.

m. Can you get close enough to a pastor to share with him the need to apply these principles?

3. Verse 13 deals with the product of this developing process.

a. Unity.

b. Maturity.

c. Conformity.

d. How do I know when I am equipping saints?

1. You are equipping saints when your group is united.

2. You are equipping saints when they are making progress.

3. You are equipping saints when they are becoming more like Christ.

i. If there is no unity there is no equipping.

ii. If no progress then no equipping.

iii. If they are not becoming like Christ there is no equipping.

iv. A new believer in our church ignited fervent prayer by his candid prayers to the Father.

v. You can't get the product of genuine faith without the process of equipping.

4. We are to no longer be children.

a. The goal of this process is to become spiritual adults.

b. An elder in my church had the same testimony for 34 years.

c. Only this process of equipping will produce mature saints.

5. We are to grow up unto Christ in all things.

a. Verse 16 talks of joints that supply, emphasizing three things.

1. Cooperation.
2. Coordination.
3. Love.

b. These three things work together in accomplishing the result. (Nehemiah 3)

1. You can have cooperation without coordination, as in a football team where all the players want to do their own thing.
2. Thirty-one times in Nehemiah 3 the phrase “next to him” occurs, and 41 times they finished the task.
3. The first century church refused to be stamped out by the Roman Empire because of the ministry of the saints. Likewise the fastest growing churches today are growing by the ministry of lay people.
4. Ministers sometimes need to get out of the way so the people can grow by communicating the faith to others.
5. Any organization is in danger of having an exaggerated opinion of itself; it is also in danger of not having a sense of calling from God.

B. The Navigators are at a time when you need to advance and not retreat.

Introduction.

- A. Do not pray for an easier life but to be stronger. Do not pray for power equal to your task but for tasks equal to your power. Then the living of your life will be no miracle but you shall be a miracle.
- B. Every member in a Christian group is to trust God for a miracle in me.
- C. When God places an individual in a group he changes the group.
- D. There is no ministry apart from men.
- E. What is a group?
 1. People that are different, creating dynamic differences.
 2. We must become students of our message but also students of men.

I. Today we want to look at a second aspect of a group; purpose.

- A. Much of Christian work is characterized by indefiniteness.
 1. Good intentions without knowing what, how, and why is futile.

2. I'm committed to a personalized ministry but clear objectives are necessary.
3. When a group convenes what do we hope to accomplish?
 - a. I just quit a group for this reason.
 - b. No one could tell me why the group was meeting but they had been meeting for 12 years.
 - c. Our meetings need to be meaningful.
 - d. Goals must be well formulated, clearly understood and personally embraced.

B. Three questions.

1. Do your members understand the reason for meeting?
2. Do they feel the purpose is important?
 - a. This is important if you are going to reach intelligent individuals.
 - b. Some average folks will come to a meeting for vague reasons, but not quality people.
 - c. I never want to take a man from his home without a worthy objective.
3. Does he feel the purpose can be achieved?

C. Three more questions that I use in determining whether objectives are good.

1. The objective must be brief enough to be remembered.
 - a. I asked a man recently what his objectives were.
 - b. He needed to read it off a card; five sentences.
 - c. It must be ready on your tongue.
 - d. I was preaching lately and became derailed as I spoke by a plaque that read, "What in the world are you trying to do to these people."
 - e. The preacher told me he needs to be specific in his preaching.
2. The objective must be clear enough to be written down.
 - a. Writing forces you to think clearly.
 - b. Socrates said that generalities are a refuge for a weak mind.

- c. I have fun in marriage counseling giving homework. I make people write out exactly what bugs them about their spouses.
- d. One lady worked 12 hours on her list with things like he won't pick up his pajamas. She realized how silly some of her objections were.
- e. Writing down our objectives forces us to think clearly.

3. The objective must be specific enough to be achieved.

- a. It must have some bite size elements.
- b. Find out where your group is and where you want to go.
- c. This is a process so we must set objectives for each level of development.
- d. If you fail to achieve objectives at a lower level you hinder success at higher levels.
 - 1. A failure to understand English hinders learning Greek.
 - 2. Failing basic objectives hinder one on down the line.
- e. Purpose always determines the future of a group.
- f. As a group moves up the ladder of commitment its objectives change.
 - 1. Basic objectives are necessary to build greater objectives.
 - 2. Dislodging error is a problem in education.
 - 3. Explaining the Gospel is not a problem, but you have to dislodge erroneous world-views.
 - 4. Emphasize intensive rather than extensive learning; teach what they need to know rather than everything they need to know.
 - 5. The Southern Baptists use training booklets for six years before rewriting the booklet with a new format. After repeated exposure to the same material people learn.

D. Three stages in getting an idea across.

- 1. Rejection; anyone who shares the Gospel or makes a proposal will be rejected because people have a faulty world-view.
 - a. Knowing this will save you a lot of disappointment.
 - b. People may not even understand what they're opposing but they will resist.

- c. I tried to start a youth program that was rejected.
- d. A pastor suggested I start a prayer program first.
- e. One day the man who had opposed my idea for a youth program told me had been praying and now he wanted to work with the youth program.

2. Toleration.

- a. They will not fight the idea any longer.
- b. They will still not embrace it.

3. Embracing.

- a. If you can hang on long enough you will see people embrace your idea.
- b. Seminary students reject and tolerate instruction for years until they get into the field and then look for their notes.
- c. Some want to bail out of ministry because they lose their perspective.
- d. Resistance is to be expected.

II. Answers to common questions:

- A. It is important to have the ultimate goal in mind though I don't always share it because people may not be ready to hear it.
- B. If they can go through the process of formulating an idea they will have great ownership and energy to carry it out.
 - 1. Pastor centered churches
 - 2. Equipping is for the body of believers.
- C. Often I want to work a program in a personal way with individuals as well as groups.
- D. I help people discover their gifts by teach the Scriptures on gifts.
 - 1. Romans 12.
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 12.
 - 3. Ephesians 4.
- E. God can give natural gifts like teaching science and spiritual gifts like teaching the word of God.

1. Someone might be a natural talent in some area but must find a venue for expressing that gift in the spiritual way.
2. Expose an individual to a variety of ministries.
3. Some teachers are surprised to realize they can teach because they never had the opportunity.
4. The gift of teaching does not qualify one to teach at every level.
 - a. A professor could not teach youth.
 - b. He went to the college group and had much success.
 - c. At SMU my professor ridiculed the Bible and we have been helping students to regain their evangelical roots.

F. We need spirit controlled men to recognize spiritual gifts.

1. This is why a group will help us develop our gifts.
2. We need one another.

G. The leadership of the Holy Spirit recognizes spiritual gifts in a person.

1. I can preach in one church or I can teach in seminary and multiply myself throughout hundreds of churches.
2. It is my passion.

H. Different groups serve different purposes.

1. With the person who knows nothing we begin with the basics.
 - a. This is primarily one way communication.
 - b. New converts need information.
2. With the believer involved in ministry we deal with problem solving.
 - a. Discussion can help arrive at solutions to problems.
 - b. Purpose determines procedure.