

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)

***Making the Case for Small Groups***

**LESSON 2: Transformation**

Churches are in the midst of an “application crisis” with unprecedented access to resources and information but no method to apply what they have learned. Small groups offer the rare opportunity for both intellectual study and life application.

Small groups commonly fall into one of two categories:

**Truth-Focused Groups**

*Content-driven*

*Bible knowledge & doctrinal alignment = maturity*

*Very little community building*

**Life-Focused Groups**

*Experience-driven*

*Free expression & acceptance = maturity*

*Very little discernment or correction*

Both categories are good but unbalanced. The key to small group effectiveness is to manage the tension between these two drives and where truth and life meet we achieve transformation.

Truth-Focused Groups	Life-Focused Groups	Transformation-Focused Groups
Know the answers to the questions	Know the answers to personal problems	Know the truth about God and me
Focus on information - What does it mean?	Focus on introspection - How do I feel?	Focus on transformation - How am I becoming like Christ?
Reward members for being right	Reward members for being real	Reward members for being honest with God and others
Community is built on the principle of agreement	Community is built on the principle of acceptance	Community is built on the principle of authenticity
The goal is a well-informed student	The goal is a well-understood self	The goal is a well-ordered heart

A well-ordered heart transcends mere information and self-understanding as it strives for Christ-likeness.

**Steps to Transformation**

*Discussion not just Q&A.* Some questions should be content-centered and some should be more personal. Be creative and interactive. Seek to make memorable moments as Jesus did in the upper room or on the Sea of Galilee.

*Use common activities to form holy moments.* Use icebreakers that make you think. In study, ask questions that challenge. Find God in people’s storytelling. Experiment with other prayer activities than circle prayer or popcorn prayer. Serve selflessly as a group.

Work aggressively to encounter God in your group. Discard divisiveness, fear, pride, and self-interest, which kill community. Do not settle for just meeting, but persist until you achieve true community.

**DISCUSSION:**

Do you lean toward Truth-Focused or Life-Focused groups?

Spend some time discussing what is meant by each of the statements in the third column of the chart.  
*HINT: Understanding their meaning requires considering the collision of columns one and two.*

Do you find the idea of transformation exciting or frightening?

Have you ever felt intimidated by prayer time or being asked to share something personal?