

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SMALL GROUPS

**Acts 2:44-47 [LB]** – “And all the believers met together constantly and shared everything with each other, <sup>45</sup>selling their possessions and dividing with those in need. <sup>46</sup>They worshipped together regularly at the Temple each day, met in small groups in homes for Communion, and shared their meals with great joy and thankfulness, <sup>47</sup>praising God. The whole city was favorable to them, and each day God added to them all who were being saved.”

- **Expository Dictionary of Bible Words:** “In NT times the house was the primary place of meeting and fellowship for believers. For the first centuries of the Christian era, believers did not meet in church buildings but in smaller, more intimate groups in homes. Thus the greeting in **Rm. 16:5** to the “church that meets at” the house of Priscilla and Aquila is a reflection of the normal pattern of early church life. It was very natural for early Christians, meeting in household groups, to sense deeply the family quality of their mutual relationship as children of God. It is also significant that the NT pays attention not only to relationships within families, but also to relationships between believers who are called on to live together and to “love as brothers.”

**Proverbs 27:17** – As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

- **Believers Bible Commentary:** Just as the action of **iron** against **iron sharpens**, so the interchange of ideas among people makes them more acute in their thinking. Sharing each other’s opinions gives a helpful breadth of view. Asking questions **sharpens** wits. Friendly intercommunication hones the personality.

**Acts 16:13-15 [NLT]** – On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we supposed that some people met for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had come together. <sup>14</sup> One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying. <sup>15</sup> She was baptized along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. “If you agree that I am faithful to the Lord,” she said, “come and stay at my home.” And she urged us until we did.

**Hebrews 10:24, 25** – “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, <sup>25</sup>not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- “**consider one another**” [vs. 24] – implying that you’re going to put their concerns first, higher than yours.
- “**stir up**” – to stimulate, spur on, urge; to irritate, provoke, arouse to anger.
- “**not forsaking**” [vs. 25] – abandon, desert, leave helpless.
- “**the assembling**” – a gathering together in one place.
- “**exhorting one another**” – to call to the side in order to encourage, strengthen, comfort.

**Galatians 5:22, 23** – *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup>gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

- **Love, joy and peace** (Christ in you) – reveal parts of God’s character that our heart has experienced.
- **Longsuffering, kindness and goodness** – the character traits we can (and should) express toward others.
- **Faithfulness, gentleness (meekness) and self-control** – the character we express toward God.

**Romans 12:9-18** [NLT] – *Don’t just pretend that you love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of the good. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. <sup>11</sup> Never be lazy in your work, but serve the Lord enthusiastically. <sup>12</sup> Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and always be prayerful. <sup>13</sup> When God’s children are in need, be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night. <sup>14</sup> If people persecute you because you are a Christian, don’t curse them; pray that God will bless them. <sup>15</sup> When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don’t try to act important, but enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don’t think you know it all! <sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup> Do your part to live in peace with everyone, as much as possible.*