

Sermon : “Better Together”
Impact Church London
Sept. 19, 2021

Recap & Intro: “Better Together”

The what, where, when and how of groups, but also the why.

I wholeheartedly believe that the power of what is about to happen is going to be released through relational networks and connections, not just from the pulpit or the stage.

It could be that single most important thing you can do to position yourself for a fruitful future is to learn, grow and develop in the area of connecting with other human beings, being relationally sound, and becoming someone who is able to both connect and be connected with.

There’s going to come a shift in the mindset of the church from seeing the world out there as those whom we do ministry on, preach to, and convert, to seeing them as already worthy of connection, belonging, and blessings because of what Jesus has already done for them.

Groups are starting next week

Tues. Rhema - 55+

Tues. Aylmer - 7pm - “Through the Eyes of Love”

Tues. South London - 7pm - “Through the Eyes of Love”

Weds. Youth - 7pm - Church

Weds. Gospel in 10 Words - 7pm Church

Thurs. Pk’s B’fast Group - 7 am - Church - Bring own b’fast

Thurs. Zoom - 7 pm Sermon Group

Fri. Zoom - 7 am - Prayer

Fri ZOOM - 1 pm Sermon

Fri. Zoom and in-Person - YA’s

Sat. Men’s Group - 9 am - bring own b’fast

N.B. **

Groups are not a substitute for Sunday services, nor are they substitutes for quality connections with friends, with family, with a close circle of people of your own choosing. Jesus had a group... he had 12. But he also had 3 that are his close

buddies. We need friendships, we need close connection. These things are not things we are entitled to, but we develop.

Groups in the Bible : 2 Sides to the Church Coin!

Acts 20:20

*You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you **publicly** and from **house to house**.*

Acts 2:46-47

*So continuing daily with one accord **in the temple**, and breaking bread **from house to house**, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people...*

Corporate gatherings and house to house, two sides of the one coin called church. Both experiences provide unique and necessary components of church life that can't be replaced by the other.

They Were Added to the church!

Acts 2:41, 47

*So those who welcomed his message were baptized, and that day about three thousand persons **were added**... And the Lord **added to the church** daily those who were being saved.*

People were added to the church when they became believers, not taught how to be successful, disconnected, lone-ranger believers whose lives revolved around their own personal success. The church didn't exist to serve them. Together they were the church, with vision, goals, and a life that transcended the sum of its parts.

The Three Basics of Impact Groups:

1. Fellowship:

Belonging and connection are basic needs for all of humanity.

Gen. 2:18

"And the LORD God said, "It is not good that man should be alone;..."

This was after he made humans and established them in relationship with himself.

Brene Brown in “Daring to Lead” (quoting neuroscience researcher John Cacioppo)

“...he makes the argument that we don’t derive our strength from our rugged individualism, but rather from our collective ability to plan, communicate, and work together. Our neural, hormonal, and genetic makeup support interdependence over independence. He [John Cacioppo] explained, ‘to grow in adulthood as a social species, including humans, is not to become autonomous and solitary, its to become the one on whom others can depend. Whether we know it or not, our brain and our biology have been shaped to favour this outcome.’”

In the Image of a Relational God!

2 Corinthians 13:14

14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

2. Function:

We can’t function properly on our own or outside of connection with others. We cannot fulfil the one another commands if we do not connect.

John 13:34

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Ephesians 4:15-16

“...but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”

Real, lasting, eternal ministry and contributions towards what God is doing in the days ahead are going to depend on the quality of your connection with others. Notice its what the joints supply that causes all parts to be positioned and equipped to do their share.

It’s getting past independence, and it’s getting past the idea that I connect with you, and you connect with me and we bless one another. It’s having a vision for connecting on a level where we partner together to let the fruit of our connection with one another be a blessings and add value to people beyond us.

We have to see ourselves as better together, yes. But the world around us is better when we are together. We have to have a vision for us, who we are, what are we becoming together that transcends us. Do you see what we can be, what we are together?

Brene Brown - Connection

"I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship."

It's our ability to connect, to give and receive without judgement, to allow ourselves and others to be seen, heard, and valued, and to engage mutually edifying relationships that is going to allow us to be fruitful.

3. Formation:

Impact Groups are a great place to exercise our spiritual gifts, bless and encourage one another, a place where we can engage in practical biblical application, and a place to share our testimony with others.

Pr. 27:17

"As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."

Pr. 27:6

"Faithful are the wounds of a friend, But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." —

1 Cor. 14:1

"Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy."

Where We Are Headed...

We live in a post-christian world. What once worked will not work any more. When you cross over you are going somewhere you have never been before.

Joshua 3:4

"Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure. Do not come near it, that you may know the way by which you must go, for you have not passed this way before."

If our vision is stadiums, full houses, and an expression of the supernatural disconnected from relationship and connection, it becomes magical thinking that at best will only reproduce the status quo.

Gen Z. Reviving Evangelism in the Next Generation

Move beyond the event... as one pastor says, evangelism is "a long-term investment, not a hand raised." Instead of focusing on a single experience or working hard to get young people to a service or event, think instead about how any gathering is relevant to and integrated into teens' daily lives and friendships.

Gone are the days when people are concerned with hearing and communicating truth. People want to know that they have been heard, and they want to connect.

Gone are the days when people are concerned about right and wrong. People want to see an ethic of congruency between what is taught and what is lived out. People are not asking the question "is Christianity true and right?" They are asking is Christianity good and is it helpful? Does it add value or cause problems?

The church of the future, the one that is going to rise to the full measure of Christ's stature in its expression and impact, in short, is going to be the one that accepts, embraces and truly believes the finished work of Christ is actually finished, and is able to apply that truth in relational connection with the world around them.

It's going to be a church that lets go of a paradigm of discipleship, personal and societal transformation that revolves around sin management, behaviour, performance, and the doing of christian things. Its going to focus on the art of being. Christian discipleship is going to look like communities helping people answer these two core questions; who am I, and how do I be who I already am?

John 13:35

Jesus said, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"

So where do groups come into this? Groups are front and centre in this paradigm shift. It is one thing to be a welcoming church that lets others sit in its pews, but the real relational stuff, that doesn't come by sitting together, but by connecting with each other. It goes beyond sharing a Sunday experience together and moves into the realm of sharing ourselves with each other.

Groups provide us with this space. They don't replace Sundays, nor do they replace quality connections with a few friends and family, but what they do do is give us the opportunity to start to make this transition to a culture of radical hospitality and acceptance, and they provide the opportunity to experience the incarnate grace and goodness of God, in his body.

Sign up today!