Relationships: From Superficial to Significant

We love because he first loved us. 1 John 4:19

Definition: “Christian fellowship is the development of significant relationships whose objective is to produce Christian character in our lives.”

Why is fellowship so essential?

1. Every believer needs accountability.
   And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

2. Every believer needs additional counsel.
   Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6
   for waging war you need guidance, and for victory many advisers. Proverbs 24:6

3. Every believer needs encouragement.
   Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

How do we move from superficial to significant relationships?

Three risks we must take:

1. Begin to ask penetrating questions.
   Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, “Who do people say I am?” They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ.” Mark 8:27-29

Examples:

- What would your mate say is the greatest contribution you make to his/her life?
- What are you most apt to lie about?
- What Christian trait is most absent?

2. Begin to reveal feelings/concerns to those persons.
   Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him. He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. Mark 8:30-32
   Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

3. Challenge a person’s behavior.
   “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37
   As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

Application:

- What has been the greatest obstacle towards deeper, more significant relationships? What two things could you do to make a difference?

- Identify 3 possible persons/couples you would be willing to pray about developing a group for the purpose of spiritual growth.

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