

## **We Can Grow In Small Groups – Ephesians 4.11-16 Pt. 8**

<sup>11</sup> And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup> so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love (Ephesians 4.11-16, ESV).<sup>1</sup>

### **Memory Verse – Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ – Ephesians 4.15**

As we work together in community and small groups, we should find ourselves growing in the knowledge and understanding of who Jesus Christ is. At the same time we should be helping others come to a great understanding and deeper relationship with Christ. This is what small groups can help us do.

Remember at the beginning of this discussion we said people who join a church and got involved in a small group of some kind were five times more likely to still be involved in their church five years later, compared to a person who only attended a worship service (see Pt.2, 3).<sup>2</sup>

Small groups are vital to a church's growth, and we should be part of a small group, such as Sunday School, Youth group, choir, AWANA, or any other small group that might be going on at church. If there are not any small groups then talk to the pastor about starting one, but this is important for our growth and the growth of the church.

Paul says here in Ephesians as we grow, we will not be tossed about like children but we will become mature Christians, who should speak the truth in love, growing up in Christ who is the Head of the Church (v15).

When we remember why we do what we do, then we can be successful. But when we start to think of ourselves as something we are not, then we are in a lot of trouble. Remembering that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church, He is the One in Charge is very important. It frees us to just serve and be servants to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

See what Paul says here, "From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for building itself up in love by the proper working of each individual part" (Ephesians 4.16, CSB).<sup>3</sup> It is from Christ we are fitted together, placed in the right place for the right purpose; supported by each other; thereby, promoting the growth of the body.

Yep, we all work together, growing together, building each other up. Yes, we can do this in the corporate worship setting, but how much more intimate and personal is the small group. Just think about how much more we get to know each other, understand each other and can really care for each other when we are in need.

Sure, many times we can make it happen in the corporate worship setting, but it is much more difficult. Most of us are rushing in and out, there is not much time for relationship building. We do need to take time to know those who are not in a small group, to invite them to be part of a group, including ours.

<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Eph 4:11–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

<sup>2</sup> Rainer, Thom, S., (2015), *I Will.*, (pp. 37), Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Company

<sup>3</sup> *Christian Standard Bible*. (2020). (Eph 4:16). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

No small group should be exclusive unless it is dealing with gender issues or age-appropriate issues. For example, men's and women's Bible Studies and Children's Sunday School Class or Youth Class, these would-be examples of exclusive groups but at times these rules might be bent, such as boys being allowed to come to the men's Bible Study.

The point here is not to only allow a select few in and then keep everyone else out. When we do this then we have created a click and not a healthy small group. Clicks will destroy the church and should not be formed. Again, understand clicks do happen because people with the same interests, likes, dislikes, and so on will seem to hang together. This is ok unless we are not allowing others to be part of the group.

Small groups grow because they have a desire to understand the Word of God and they want to see others know God's Word too. Therefore, they will learn, study, invite, encourage, live, and share the gospel message with their friends, family and circle of contacts. It is through this sharing the group grows and the Kingdom of God is increased, which is our ultimate goal.

### **Application**

1. Are you part of a small group? If so, how has the group impacted your life? Have you invited anyone else to be part of the group?
2. What could you do to make the group better?
3. Deeper Thinking: Think of one person you have invited to your small group, but has not come yet—Now think of someone you have not invited yet. Take a few moments and pray for both of them, that God will encourage them to come, and give you the courage to invite them again and for the first time. Pray now.
4. Commit to learning Ephesians 4.15 and Witnessing to someone about what God has done for you.

### **Prayer**

Oh, Father in heaven, Master of all You see, thank You for Your love and compassion, and mercy and grace. I know there is no way I could ever understand why You loved me so, or sent Your Son to die in my place. But what I do know is You have called me to share Your message with my friends and circle of contacts. You have also asked me to have a relationship with You, and I have not done a very good job at that. Lord I need to die to myself and live for You. Help me to spend more time in Your Word, in Prayer to You and find the time to share Your gospel with others. Lord, I need an opportunity to share Your gospel and to have confidence along with a fearless heart to be a leader so others will hear and know who You are, I cannot do this on my own please help me to be the Christian You have called me to be. This I pray in Your Dear Son Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.