

ARC Small Groups Newsletter, June 6, 2007

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Serving Together,
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Just Walk Across the Room

God is calling – will you answer? When the phone rings at my house it's usually for my wife. However, Cassie never wants to answer her phone. So, it's left to me. I have a choice. I hear the phone ringing, I know that Cassie not moving a muscle, I know that whoever is on the other end wants to talk to her and not to me. I have a choice to make that involves a sacrifice on my part. I've got to stop whatever I'm doing and answer the phone because I value communication so much that I want to sacrifice my time for the sake of my wife's friendships.

Now, this isn't much of a sacrifice. Truthfully it's probably better for me to stop watching Sportscenter and get off of the couch to answer the phone. But when God calls us – when the blinking red God phone is ringing in our lives, do we want to answer. Wouldn't it be great if God talked to us in this way? Well, this month of June God has called Autumn Ridge to the task of personal evangelism. And it's not just for a month, it's for our future as Christ followers. God has decided to use our pulpit and our small groups for the month

of June to move people in the direction of loving others into God's kingdom. We have a choice. We can respond by ignoring the phone call – maybe God will just leave a message. Or we can answer the call and jump into the radical inclusiveness that God has planned for his Kingdom.

The Just Walk Across the Room campaign is a great way to get new people involved in small groups. But it's more than just a way to funnel people into community – it's really about the challenge of following Jesus in a way that impacts our friends, family, and neighbors. The God phone is ringing and we have a chance to answer the call and hear God's Holy Spirit speaking into our lives. I don't know about you, but I want to take that Phone call.

Upcoming Small Group Events

Willow Creek Small Groups Conference – September 27-29

“Three days at Willow Creek is worth a year of teaching on small groups.”

Or so says one small group junkie at Autumn Ridge. If you want to be encouraged and resourced in your small group leadership, then this conference is the way to go. This year we are hoping to fill a busload of people to catch the small group vision and learn how they are best gifted to serve God within the small group ministry. You might find yourself saying, “But I'm already on board with small groups, you don't need me to go to an event like this.” On the contrary, if you are already on board with small groups, you are exactly the right person to go to an event like this. Willow Creek promises to be three exciting days of teaching, fellowship, teambuilding, and vision casting. Autumn Ridge's small group ministry will be better off if you attend this conference.

Resources for Leading Your Small Group

The Secret to Sharing Your Story

One skill every small group leader should have is the ability to talk with unbelievers about your experience of God in ordinary language that an unbeliever will understand. In the church we use some specialized words like "repentance" and "being saved." Of course, the average person who hasn't been to church very often has no clue what these words mean. But everybody in your group speaks English—at least a little—and every one of them has a story. They may not think their story is all that interesting, but unbelievers are interested in our experience of God—if we talk in ordinary language and if we give them brief pieces of our story that fit into an ordinary conversation.

A good way to do this is by shaping ahead of time how you would tell your story. Having your story prepared in your mind before an opportunity to share it arises, helps you make the most of that sharing opportunity.

Here are some guidelines on what you might include in your story:

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus. What substitutes for God I used find meaning in life.
2. How I realized I needed Jesus.
3. How I committed my life to Jesus.
4. The difference this choice has made in my life.

For each of these categories, you should come up with a one-minute story

to weave together—or to be individually popped into a conversation. If each part of your story goes on longer than one minute you will lose people's interest.

Anyway, that's just one way to tell your story. If you've been a believer

since you were a child, you might tell a story about how you realized you

were substituting something for God in your life, and how or why you

stopped doing that. I'm sure you've been at least tempted to substitute something for God sometime in your Christian life. For many people, this can be work. For other, this may be money or success or the perfect family. And these are all things an unbeliever can relate to. Your story will pack its biggest punch when you then tell the unbeliever why Jesus is better than these things. Being asked to tell your story may make you feel like Moses when God told him to speak in front of others, and he said, "Oh Lord, I can't do it! I am slow of speech and tongue!" And the Lord said, "I will help you speak and will teach you what to say." If you're nervous about how you'll tell your story, remember that God will help you as you write your story and as you share it with the group. This will be a powerful experience for everyone.

Video – Grace Fuels our Spiritual Life

This is a great resource from *Solutions on Video*:
To watch this video from Henry Cloud, Priscilla Shirer, Richard Foster, and Dallas Willard, click [here](#).