



Publication of the Small Group Ministry Team  
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## *Growing in Christ Through Small Groups*

**WHY I AM A MEMBER OF A SMALL GROUP** by Sue Shannon

The reasons for being a member of a small group did not occur to me when our small group began a few years ago. It took some time to realize that being a part of this group was more than Bible study. The following are my discoveries:

1. I have met new interesting people and look forward to seeing them on a regular basis. Friendships grow with time and are an important part of my life.
2. I feel comfortable sharing my life's experiences with group members and enjoy hearing their stories. Through this sharing I have learned more about myself.
3. Bible study with the group has allowed me to grow deeper in the faith and understand God's ultimate love for me.
4. I have discovered special gifts that God has given me of which I did not have prior knowledge. The group members have encouraged me with thoughts and prayers and my life has been changing in a positive God centered direction.
5. Daily prayer is an important part of my life and the prayer requests of the members of my group are an important part of my conversations with the Father.
6. I have become more concerned for our church's mission work since I have group members to share this concern. Our group participates in special projects both on the home mission front and for our missionaries through O.C. International.

The small group does not replace the church worship service, the large Sunday School class, or individual study, however the small group is a vital part of the Saratoga Federated Church.

### **Small Group News**

#### **The Six Week Lenten Study will begin March 9, 2011**

Ash Wednesday, March 9, will begin the Lenten season, which concludes on Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011. The entire church will be engaged in a Lenten study for this six-week period. All small groups are asked to postpone their current study and adopt the Lenten study for this six-week period. There will be leader training for all small group leaders as well as those persons who wish to organize a group of friends for this six-week session. The Small Group Ministry Team is ready and able to help you with the materials and ideas for a smooth facilitation of the group dynamics.

Sally Bryant is asking for leaders who are willing to train and mentor new leaders to attend a session with her in January. You are asked to make yourself known to us by calling Camille or Roll Chapman at 408-252-2898 or emailing Sally Bryant at [sally@saratogafederated.org](mailto:sally@saratogafederated.org). You will be informed of the details of this training as soon as we know your name and your willingness to serve in this very important way! Please put this request foremost on your list of things to do!

## **Fellowship ~ the highlight in attending a small group**

What a privilege to meet with others who share your faith! It is difficult to get to know others in the big church if you do not have the opportunity to meet them, converse together by sharing stories, experiences, and how this relates to living for God in this world! *If attending our church is a new experience for you, we would like to meet you and suggest that you visit a small group.*

To have this experience you will need to call Camille or Rol Chapman at 252-2898 to find out the best group that is available for you to visit or leave your name and number for the opportunity to begin with a newly organized group. New groups will be organized for the six-week Lenten study, so leave your name and number and we will contact you with the time and place of the newly organized group or groups. There will be some choices of times for the Lenten study groups. Meeting for a limited period of time will give you the opportunity to experience a small group for study, discussion and fellowship.

## **The Small Group Soup Supper ~ March 5, 2011**

The Small Group Ministry Team will again sponsor an all congregation soup dinner and a beginning of Lent Chapel service. Many small groups attended and brought delicious soups, breads and desserts last year. The team members were available to talk to those of the congregation who were not in small groups and many of the leaders of open groups were there to meet the people interested in joining a group. The food was fabulous and the Lenten service was a beautiful beginning for our six week Lenten study and worship.

**Put this date on your 2011 calendars as a must attend if you are looking for a small group to join, or if you are a leader or a member of a small group.**

## **Small Group Leader's Input Needed**

The Small Group Ministry Team needs for you to input the current names of your group members into the SFC database. Here is all you do:

Go to <https://sfc.ccbchurch.com> If you don't have a username or password yet you may click on **Sign Up** at bottom left, complete the form being sure to click **Submit**. Log into your group and click the group participant's tab at the top right hand side of your screen. Enter the names of your group members. Email [och@saratogafederated.org](mailto:och@saratogafederated.org) if you need assistance and one of the church database team members will help you.

## **Community Service Day**

Many small groups joined with others to provide many services for our community. The green T-shirts worn by workers in the church services on November 14 were evidence of the many who volunteered on that special community service day! What an opportunity to do good things for others and to witness to those who do not attend a church or desperately need help because they cannot attend a church service. Small groups had the opportunity to serve in many capacities such as sorting food at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest Food Bank, taking blankets and other needed items to folks in local nursing homes, helping needy families in our church and community with house cleaning and yard work, and about twelve more projects that required several hours of work. Those who received this service will indeed remember the people who came and witnessed with not only words but with caring help that was needed!

**Thanks, Laurie Sutterfield**, for leading a class for group leaders on how to enhance our ability to ask the type of questions that unlock deeper learning and life application. It is hoped that this class will be repeated in the Spring.

## **Small Groups, a Place for Seekers**

People who do not attend a church learn best when they discover truth through questions, good listening, and studying the Bible in a caring small group community. There may be someone in your life that has questions about life and God. Invite them to your small group and in a non-threatening atmosphere they may feel safe to ask whatever is troubling them about God.

## **BOOKS FOR READING**



These books are recommended for individual or group studies to help in daily living.

***When the Hurt Runs Deep*** by Kay Arthur (WaterBrook Press, 2010) The author tells how the hurt can be the doorway that leads you to greater strength.

***Life Lessons: the Book of James*** by Max Lucado, (Nelson Impact, 2007) This study is revised and updated and brings the book of James to life in twelve lessons. The study questions are very good for today's small group discussions or for individual contemplation.

***Unlocked*** by Karen Kingsbury (Zondervan, 2010) This is a story of an eighteen year old who is locked in a prison of autism. The story unfolds and everyone is stunned by the transformation they witness.

***What Good Is God? In Search of a Faith that Matters*** by Phillip Yancey (FaithWords 2010) Yancey's search included meetings with leaders in the underground church in China, with Dalits (untouchables) in India, with prostitutes, alcoholics, Bible College students in the United States, and with charismatic Christians in Johannesburg.

## ***Have a Blessed Christmas and a Fabulous New Year!***

### **Community Outreach Ministries**

Your small group has an opportunity to serve these ministries:

***Downtown Ministries*** - Joe and Marilyn Berg (408-867-3299)  
or Jim Nichols (408-248-6836)

***Advent Ministries Group*** - Bob Leonard (408-741-0213)

***CityTeam Ministries*** - Jeff Cherniss (408-232-5600)

For an overview of needs and service for this ministry go to

<http://www.cityteam.org/hr/SJvolunteer.html>

***Robin Hood Ministries*** - Keith Fraker (867-7830)

***Community Pregnancy Center*** - Marjo Spencer (408-354-0958)

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: 2-1-11**

