

The Big Picture for small groups

God:

God himself exists in community: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is Trinity: three in one, three persons of one essence, who love each other with a perfect love and whose love overflowed in the creation and redemption of humanity. We love, because God first loved us (1 Jn 4:19).

God's image:

God created humanity in His image (Gen 1:27). We are not primarily rational beings; we are *relational* beings. We were created for community—with God and each other. It was not good for Adam to be alone (Gen 2:18), and so God created Eve. At the beginning of creation, Adam and Eve were naked and not ashamed (Gen 2:25). Humanity was designed for relationships of security with each other and their Creator. Our sin nature and sinful culture have marred these relationships, but in Christ there is redemption.

God's body:

While each of us bears the image of God, only corporately can we reflect who He is. He has made us His body, with Jesus Christ as the head (Col 1:18). Each of us serves a different function in the body, and we need each other (Rom 12:4-5, 1Cor 12:12-27). The church is the body of Christ. Small groups help to build up the body of Christ.

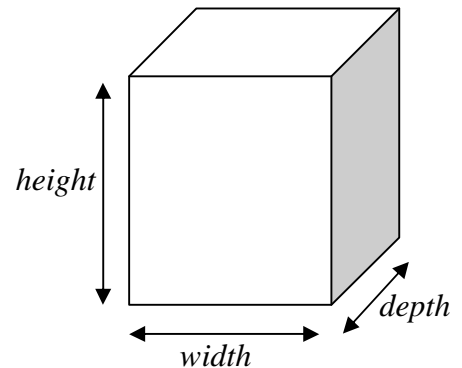
God's commands:

Ever since the Garden of Eden, Satan has been tempting humans to ignore God's commands and doubt His goodness. We need to sharpen each other, as iron sharpens iron (Prov 27:17). The New Testament overflows with passages that command us how to relate with "one another". Small groups provide the structure and environment for us to grow in understanding of and obedience to God's commands.

*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 Cor 13:14*

Three Dimensions of Small Groups from 1John

We know that we have come to know him
if _____.



If we claim to have fellowship with him
yet walk in the darkness,
we lie and do not live by the truth.
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light,
we _____
and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard,
so that you also may have fellowship with us.
And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus
Christ.
We write this in order to _____

*I am not writing you a new command
but one we have had from the beginning.
I ask that we love one another.
And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.
As you have heard from the beginning,
his command is that you walk in love.
(2 John 5-6)*