

We are continuing our Velocity series this week. So far, we have talked about living life with Missional Velocity, which means to live our lives with the PURPOSE God intends for us and last week we talked about Spiritual Velocity, living with a different PERSPECTIVE on life.

This week, we're talking about Relational Velocity. Relational Velocity deal with the PEOPLE you connect with along the way. Relationships are a core value at Journey Church and the Growth Groups are a primary catalyst to help those relationships develop. So let's dive in . . .

- Think about the time in your life when you felt the most connected to a particular group or team.
 - **What characteristics of that group made you feel so connected?**
 - **How long did it take to develop that level of connection?**
 - **Does the group/team still exist? Does an unusual sense of connection still exist within the group/team members? Why do you think that is/is not?**
- READ: *Acts 2:42-47*. The following are some key words found in this passage.
 - **How do you see each of these words at work in this passage?**
 - **How do you see each at work at Journey Church?**
 - *DEVOTED*
 - *AWE (Worship)*
 - *TOGETHER*
 - *COMMON/SHARED*
 - *ADDED*
- READ: *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*
 - **What four advantages of being in community with others do we find in this passage?**
 - **In what ways are you experiencing these advantages as a part of a Growth Group?**
- **In what ways can your Growth Group grow a sense of community with you this week?**
 - Prayer Requests:
 - Physical Needs:
 - Other:



Growth Groups
Leaders' Travel Guide
Week of August 31-September 6, 2008

Growth Group Leaders:

This weeks' discussion is ALL ABOUT GROWTH GROUPS!

I appreciate the feedback I received from MOST of you this past week. It's great to hear how our new groups are starting to gel together and experience life change and community!

With this weeks' topic, it is ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL that you take notes and give us DETAILED FEEDBACK on what you hear in your groups. *The stories you share will be KEY to the success of Growth Groups down the road.*

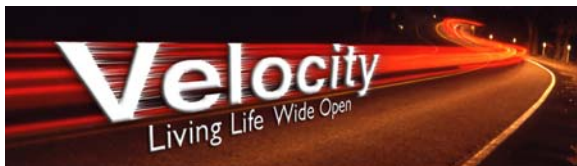
We need to know where we're falling short.

We need to know where we're doing best.

We need to know how to help you help your group.

FYI – the end of the discussion opens the door for prayer requests and personal needs. BE SURE to save time to pray for requests and to find practical ways to meet needs.

Thanks!
Andrew



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The opening group of questions is to get your folks thinking about the concept of "authentic community." For you as a leader, there's a lot of potential for you to diagnose some needs and perspectives in your group. Listen for clues from your group members as to what they think it takes to have deep relationships. At the end of the discussion, ask them how they think these characteristics can be developed in your Growth Group.

- Think about the time in your life when you felt the most connected to a particular group or team.
 - **What characteristics of that group made you feel so connected?**

Some elements you will most likely hear are: Common Interest/Goals, Time spent together, Adversity/Problems, Key leaders/personalities, etc. Again, be sure to remember what you hear.

- **How long did it take to develop that level of connection?**

For some folks, it may have been quick. For others, it may be a long-time development. You may want to ask "why do you think that is?" as a follow-up. You will probably discover that the more outside influences put pressure on the group, the faster the connection developed.

- **Does the group/team still exist? Does an unusual sense of connection still exist within the group/team members? Why do you think that is/is not?**

This question is really just an opportunity to close out the train of thought. However, you may find an opportunity to encourage the fact that keeping a deep connection going requires ongoing work. If you do, try to point it out as you move forward in the discussion.

- READ: *Acts 2:42-47*. The following are some key words found in this passage.
 - **How do you see each of these words at work in this passage?**
 - **How do you see each at work at Journey Church?**

The following notes will help you coach your folks in how the elements are found in the passage. Try to help your folks connect what they find in the passage directly to what they are experiencing at Journey Church. If you find a big strength, celebrate it and let us know. If you find a weakness, follow up with a “why do you think this is,” but don’t let your folks be overly critical or dwell on any one issue too long. Definitely challenge them to suggest some ways to overcome the weakness, particularly within your group.

- ***DEVOTED***

The early church DEVOTED themselves to:

- The apostles’ teaching (for us, this would be the Bible, or Word of God)
- Fellowship (spending time together, getting to know each other, having fun together, etc.)
- Breaking of bread (meals, the Lord’s Supper)
- Prayers

- ***AWE (Worship)***

In this passage, Awe (or fear) is a healthy response to recognizing the power of God at work in your midst. There were some amazing things happening in the early church. A healthy dose of awe can help us be humble and not take credit for ourselves.

- ***TOGETHER***

The early church didn’t just gather once a week. They “Did life together.” On a daily basis, they went to public gather places (like the Temple), they gathered in each others’ homes, they ate together. They were glad to be with each other in every circumstance they encountered.

- ***COMMON/SHARED***

Some groups have claimed that this element means that Christ Followers should renounce their personal ownership of stuff and donate it all to the common community. A far better understanding of this passage is that each person retained their ownership and personal responsibility for “their stuff,” but they held on to that stuff a whole lot more loosely than they held on to their connection to each other. **If someone had a need, someone with means did whatever it took to meet that need.**

- ***ADDED***

One of the most important aspects of the early church is that the depth and strength of their community attracted other people. As the Church learns to develop strong, deep, caring relationships, it becomes more and more attractive to those outside. When the Church fights, bickers, and divides itself, its attractiveness wanes and the ability to attract others dissipates.

How can we at Journey Church develop an attractive community before outsiders?

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- READ: *Ecclesiastes 4:9-12*
 - **What four advantages of being in community with others do we find in this passage?**

- 1 - They have someone to share rewards with.
- 2 - They can help each other when someone falls or struggles.
- 3 - They can keep each other fired up and focused on the goal.
- 4 - They can team up to overcome problems and adversaries.

- **In what ways are you experiencing these advantages as a part of a Growth Group?**

Again, this is a great opportunity to diagnose the health of your group.

- **In what ways can your Growth Group grow a sense of community with you this week?**

As you go through the following, take some time to specifically find practical ways to meet needs, to pray for each other, and to build community together.

- Prayer Requests:

Take time to pray for each request.

- Physical Needs:

See if someone in the group can rise to meet the need. If the church can help, let us know.

- Other:

Maybe your group needs to plan a “night out” to a movie, restaurant, golf/minigolf, etc.

Maybe your group needs a “game night” to gather at someone’s home to hang out and have fun.

Maybe your group needs a “family picnic” to allow group members and their children gather at a local park to throw a frisbee, play flag football, and eat some food together.

I suggest you start planning your first “get off the couch” activity – a service project out in the community.

These are just some suggestions. Let me know what you come up with!