

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Numbers, Part 8
September 17, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Leadership Conference** is this Friday and Saturday, September 22-23 - For those who registered, we'll see you soon!
- **Want to lead/host a Small Group?** Please attend our upcoming Foundations in Leadership class. For more information or to register, log onto www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/2162.
- **Ministry Fair** - next Sunday, September 24, in the Youth Room. Peruse the many ministry booths to meet the ministry leaders, find out about upcoming events, and discover ways you can get involved.
- **For all other Rock Announcements** please go to <http://www.therocksandiego.org/announcements/> or see the Rock Event Calendar at <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MEMORY VERSE

And Balaam said to Balak, "Look, I have come to you! Now, have I any power at all to say anything? The word that God puts in my mouth, that I must speak." Number 22:38

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

Getting Started

1. Many times our busy lives keep us only superficially connected with each other. Do you find that to be true? How so? What else besides "busyness" keeps us from having deep friendships with others?
2. Think about some of the significant, deep, and mutual friendships you've had in the past. How did those relationships start? What brought you together? What kept you close?

Digging Deeper

3. The Bible tells us that we are constantly engaged in a spiritual battle (Ephesians 6:10-20) and we need our Christian brothers and sisters for support. What do these verses tell us about God's vision for our relationship with one another?
 - a. Proverbs 27:17
 - b. Hebrews 10:24-25
 - c. Philippians 2:1-4
 - d. Ephesians 4:25
 - e. Colossians 3:15
 - f. Romans 12:3-5
4. Part of fostering relationships where we have a deep connection and can sharpen, exhort, and build one another up requires that we are open to hearing criticism from others. In other words, it requires that we allow others to "speak the truth in love" to us. Consider the following verses. How do these commands help us to make space in our life to let others be truthful with us? In what way do these verses challenge you to open yourself up to feedback from other Christians?

a. Proverbs 29:23

c. James 4:6

b. Matthew 18:4; 23:12

d. 1 Peter 5:5-6

5. Pastor Miles challenged us directly to be honest with someone in our lives this week who needs to be “built up” or “corrected.” Read Ephesians 4:15. What are the core components of a difficult conversation like this?

6. Difficult conversations often go much better when we “wrap them” in a particular attitude. 1 Peter 4:8 talks about the attitude we need. What attitude do we need to adopt? What would that look like if you had to confront someone? What would you do differently? What words would you select?

Bringing it Home

Think about this a bit...

Even though we toss around the word accountability, we Christians do not truly practice or even understand how the Lord wants us to keep one another on track. We are afraid to say some tough things out of fear that we will hurt someone’s feelings, or that the hearer might become defensive or even hostile toward us. The sad truth is, those fears may be well-founded. Often, I have resented a friend who spoke the truth to me out of love, only to realize later that he was right in bringing these things to my attention.

God’s word tells us that not only do we have a right, but we have an obligation to hold each other accountable for our actions, especially when we observe a fellow believer acting in a way that does not reflect God’s will.

We need relationships with others to maintain our spiritual health. It is how He designed us.

- Quote found at <http://www.middletree.net/accountability.asp>

7. What do you think about this quote? Does this thought make sense to you? Have you found this personally true in your own life?

8. The homework from Sunday was to “be a friendly donkey to someone.” Do you have a plan for doing this? Or, if you already have done it, can you share your experience?

9. Do you have reservations about being a friendly donkey? Do you need a friendly donkey to support you? How can your small group support you?