

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Who Are You?

Questions written by Mark Collins

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Small Group Announcement – ATTENTION—THERE HAS BEEN A DATE CHANGE!!!! On February 17th the Rock Small Group ministry will be hosting a new kind of Small Group sign-up. We are asking every Rock Small Group to be represented that day to promote your group in a “Ministry Fair” type atmosphere. We ask that your small group be a part of helping the Rock Body find greater Biblical Community. To sign up all you have to do is go to www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/3646/. For more information call Mark @ 619-764-5146 or contact him at mark.collins@therocksandiego.org for more details.

Global Announcement - If someone in your group needs financial guidance encourage them to sign up now for Rock U's Adopting God's Principles for Handling Money class. Class starts February 1st. It's still not too late! This course takes an in-depth look at God's purpose, plan, and principles for handling money and possessions. You'll learn both the scriptural foundations and practical steps toward becoming financially free. You'll learn how to live a life of contentment, including ideas on applying these principles to the marriage and family. (For married couples or those considering marriage – this course is a must!) Join us as we get financially fit in 2008! Register at www.therockuniversity.org. For more info, contact Danielle Demko at danielle.demko@therocksandiego.org or call 619.764.5123. **For all other Rock events**, please go <http://www.therocksandiego.org/eventcalendar/>.

MINISTRY PRAYER REQUESTS

As “small groupies,” you are the heart and soul of this ministry--who better than you to lift up the Small Group Ministry in prayer? So, it's up to you, you can spend time in your small group praying for these things (weekly or occasionally), or you can pray during the week on your own time. If you'd like to be added to our Pastor's Prayer Team, just let us know. Mark Collins, the Small Group Pastor, would love your prayers! We send out a monthly email of his personal and ministry prayer requests. Just contact Andy Rodgers at andy.rodgers@therocksandiego.org. May God work through your prayers mightily!

Reaching the Lost: Pray that all of our groups participate in our up coming Small Group sign up. Also, in March, the Small group ministry will be training and deploying a new type of small groups called: Seeker Small Groups. More info will be coming, but it will be an adventure!

Current Small Group Leaders/Small Groups: Pray that all of our Small Group leaders and group members ask God if He is calling them to a fast, and the courage to be obedient during this unique spiritual time.

Potential Small Group Leaders: Pray that our current leaders continue to give their ministry away and develop future leaders to reach their full potential in Jesus.

Small Group Staff: Pray that God gives us the favor and wisdom to rebuild the Small Group team. Ask Him to order our steps in every decision we make.

The Rock Body: Pray that the Rock Army grows deeper and deeper in the stewardship of their lives in Christ.

MEMORY VERSE

“The people I have shaped for myself will broadcast my praises.” Isaiah 43:21 (NJB)

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS – WHO ARE YOU?

The title of this message has probably been asked more than any other questions in human history. The questions of who we are and why we’re here have been asked by everyone from philosophers to kings, from tyrants to saints. Everywhere you look there’s a new book, a new seminar, to tell you why you’re here and what life’s all about. The simple truth is that you were put on this earth to make a contribution. You weren’t created just to consume resources—to eat, breathe and take up space. You were created to serve God. In fact each person has been uniquely shaped to serve God. The Bible says, *“We are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”* In other words you’re not a massed produced, assembly line product, but a custom designed, one-of-a-kind original masterpiece. He carefully mixed your DNA to be unique and the complexity of who you are is mind boggling. He did all this to show you His love and to use you for His service.

Whenever God gives us an assignment, he always equips us with what we need to accomplish it. That’s why every believer is given unique spiritual gifts to be used in ministry. These gifts are special God-empowered abilities only given to Christians. The Bible says, *“Whoever does not have the Spirit cannot receive the gifts that come from God’s Spirit.”* You can’t earn your spiritual gifts nor do you deserve them—that’s why they are called *gifts!* They are an expression of God’s grace which the Holy Spirit distributes. He alone decides which gifts each person should have. Your spiritual gifts were not given for your own benefit but the benefit of others, just as other believers were given gifts for your benefit. When we use our spiritual gifts together we all benefit. If other’s don’t use their gifts you get cheated and if you don’t use your gifts, they get cheated, it’s really that simple. Before architects design any new building they first ask: What will be its purpose? How will it be used? The intended function determines the form and the function of the building. Before the foundation of the world God pre-designed you to fulfill a specific role that was designed only for you. Today, as we look at the Body of Christ we see many tasks left unfulfilled. We can see those in the body hurting and disconnected. That’s why it’s so important to fulfill God’s divine purpose he had in mind for you!

Getting Started

1. As you get started today try opening up your time together with this little skit. Ask for “actors” ahead of time without telling the whole group. You will need just two people (but as the leader don’t volunteer your self to do this) 1. A scripture reader and 2. A person willing to fall down in front of the group. In 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Paul reminds his small group that according to the conventional wisdom of the day, their dream of changing the world wouldn’t succeed. Their group was uneducated and lacked influence or wealth. Yet this small band of believers possessed one thing in their favor they all had spiritual gifts. Ask the scripture reader to read 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 aloud.

- a. As the person finishes reading this Scripture, it will be the actor's cue to enter the room with a snack (best individually wrapped) and fake a stumble, spilling the snacks in the middle of the room. After the mishap, sit back and watch what happens. Often the gifts of the group members are manifested. The person with a serving gift will respond quickly by helping to clean up. The teacher will attempt to try to figure out what happened. The administrator will quickly organize the entire group to fix the problem. The merciful will identify with the embarrassed host. The prophet might yell, "Be careful," while the exhorter might encourage the person to keep on trying. The giver might offer to bring the dessert next time!
- b. Tell everyone this was a planned accident. Then ask the group to discuss how everyone reacted. Who helped? Who laughed? Who determined what caused it? Who said "I'm sorry" when they did nothing wrong? What have we learned about each other?

Digging Deeper

Ask a few different people to read the following Scriptures Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:27-31 and 1 Peter 4:9-11. In the first century pagan worship included trances, seizures, rantings and ecstatic utterances. Church services might not have made a lot of sense but they were quite entertaining! In these passages Paul spends some time explaining spiritual gifts and their benefits in the church and in the life of a believer.

1. After reading these Scriptures have your group take a shot at defining spiritual gifts. How do spiritual gifts differ from natural talents?
2. What spiritual gifts (as opposed to natural talents) do you recognize in another member of this group?
3. Ask some of your group members to describe a time when the Holy Spirit worked powerfully through them with a spiritual gift. What happened?
4. One of Paul's purposes in writing the letter to the church in Corinth was to correct some abuses and misunderstandings of spiritual gifts. When it comes to spiritual gifts there are two common problems that often happen among believers: *gift envy* and *gift projection* (judging someone else through the eyes of your unique gift).
 - a. How could gift envy cripple someone's service to the body of Christ? Where do you think gift envy comes from?
 - b. How could gift projection create unfair and ungodly expectations of others within the church or in your small group?
5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-31. In this section, Paul makes his point by analogizing the members of the church to the human body and all its parts. While some parts of the body get more attention (the eyes for instance certainly get more play than the common bile duct) all are important.

- a. What can this passage teach us about unity in your small group? How does unity differ from uniformity?

Why is diversity so important?

- b. How should the knowledge of our interdependence upon one another affect our actions when it comes to the people in your group?

Bringing it Home

Finish your time together by asking someone to read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Imagine the surprise of the Corinthians—all hyped up about those externally expressive gifts when Paul in 12:31 tells drops the bombshell and tells them that there is something much more important than Spiritual Gifts and that's love. Spiritual gifts that are not delivered in maturity (love) can easily become divisive. So what does love got to do with spiritual gifts anyway? Paul gives us some pretty concrete definitions of the word love in 13:4-7.

6. What's the relationship between Paul's definitions of love found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and spiritual gifts? Why is love greater?
7. Think of a painful experience you have gone through that God has used to develop your love for others. How could God couple your love and spiritual gifts to help others who are going through the same kind of situation?
8. End this session with prayer asking God to help every member of your group to find a place of ministry. What can your group do together to serve the body of Christ? You're better together! Learn to love one another by serving together!