



Don't get lost in the crowd

Home groups offer a personal touch of encouragement.

by FELICIA SWOPE

Our family had just moved to Lee's Summit from Arizona and was looking for new connections.

While we were excited about our new church home, we were also overwhelmed at LSCC. It was much larger than the church we had left behind. We began to feel discouraged when, after a few months, we still had not met many people.

The turning point came one Sunday morning when we found ourselves chatting with a friendly couple who invited us to visit their home group. Nearly two years later, we're still in that group and have made close friends. Because we see people we know everywhere, the church doesn't seem as large. We feel connected.

Many people may not know that LSCC started as a home group. Twenty years later, the church hosts about 40 of these groups.

"It's one of the best ways for people to be connected in the church," said George Gilliam, a home group leader for nine years. "You get to have face-to-face interaction with people, which is different from the church environment where you have more of a spectator view."

Groups differ from worship services or classes in that their goal is to promote interaction. In this setting, group members learn not only from the Bible, but from one another. In the process they get to know each other in a supportive environment.

Because groups meet in homes instead of the church building, they also have a different vibe. The setting is informal and relaxed, promoting open and honest dialogue. Yet no one is compelled to share or pray aloud.

"The greatest benefit for me has been the challenge for spiritual growth that takes place in this Christian community," said Dawn Henseler, a home group member for five years and a lay leader in LSCC's counseling ministry. "It is a time to be real and honest in a place where grace and help is found."

Tim Luke, director of Discipleship Ministries, said the Christian experience is incomplete without involvement in a small group of likeminded people.



At LSCC, about 40 home groups help people to connect with friends in a supportive environment.

photos courtesy of Dave Herрман



Home groups help believers to apply the Scriptures to everyday life.

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— George Gilliam

"There is no 'Lone Ranger' in the Christian life," he said. "There is no army of one. God wants to surround us with a platoon of encouraging men and women who are going in the same direction."

As we begin a new year, it's a great time to reflect on new habits or changes we want to add to our lives. I encourage you to consider joining a home group. The risks are none and the rewards many.

I can tell you from first-hand experience that you'll be glad you did.

Writer Felicia Swope is a member of LSCC.



Call to action

To find a group, visit www.lscckc.org or a computer terminal in the church's lobbies or Common Ground cafe.