

ALL Involved

(Part of the Body)

The term "Cell" comes from the idea of the church as a body - a living organism made up of smaller cells which multiply and are vital to the life of the whole.

Today we're exploring the first of 5 values which are key to healthy cells.

- All Involved
- Becoming Disciples
- Creating Community
- Doing Evangelism
- Encountering God

Welcome (15 mins)

Play pictorial in two groups - strict time limit.

What makes a good team?

Word (55 mins)

Brainstorm on a piece of paper as many gifts/talents/skills people can bring to your cell group (eg. Hospitality, a car for lifts, being able to put things simply so others can understand, making people feel welcome)

Read 1 Corinthians 12.12-31. Then discuss with this overall question in mind - **What does this passage mean for your cell group?**

- **What happens to the leg if the eye stops working?**
- **Why didn't God make everyone good at everything?**
- **What should you do if your cell group is missing something you think is important?**
- **What happens in your cell group if everyone plays their part?**
- **What happens if some don't play their part?**
- **Why is it important for everyone to be involved in a cell?**

Here are some other relevant passages - Ephesians 2.10, Ephesians 4.11-16, 1 Corinthians 14.26

Share prayer requests and pray. Pray for the involvement of every member in the church - and especially for those who find it difficult to feel "part of things" because their main involvement in ministry is through responsibilities at home or work.

Worship

Focus your worship on thanking God specifically for the people who are serving in different roles on the body of Christ. Begin by reading aloud 1 Corinthians 12.4-11 and then take it in turns to pray short prayers of thanks. Give space for silence. You could possibly intersperse your prayers with reading a verse or two from the rest of the chapter to inspire further praise.

Witness/ Work it Out

Spend a few minutes discussing how could you spread the responsibility for the overall running of your group. Here are a few roles which could be taken on/ shared by different people.

- Group co-ordinator
- Host (venue provider or refreshments provider)
- Prayer co-ordinator
- Worship leader (not necessarily with music)
- Bible study leader (regular/occasional)
- Organising ways to witness - in word (eg. hot potatoes eve) or deed (working party to do someone's garden or a churchyard/ organising litter-pick)
- Telephone mate (keeping in touch with those who cant always make it to the meeting - for prayer, support and keeping up to date)

Acknowledgements:

Phil Potter, The Challenge of Cell Church Chapter 3

Becoming Disciples

(Part of the Vine)

The term "Cell" comes from the idea of the church as a body - a living organism made up of smaller cells which multiply and are vital to the life of the whole. Today we're exploring the second of 5 values which are key to healthy small groups in churches.

All Involved
Becoming Disciples
Creating Community
Doing Evangelism
Encountering God

Welcome (15mins)

Think back to your school days - was your school an effective place of learning? Can anyone remember things that they learned parrot fashion but have never used? What experiences or people have you learned the most from in your life?

Word (50 mins)

Read John 15.1-17

1. Look in John's gospel at what happens before and after Jesus says these words. What other things does he talk to his disciples about? What do you think was his intention in this section of teaching?
2. The word "disciple" means "learner" or "student". What learning opportunities did Jesus give his disciples? Ideas can be found in John 2.11; Matthew 5.1-12; 10.1-15;

14.22-33; 18.1-6; 26.36-46; Luke 9.18-21 How can we have similar experiences today?

3. Jesus describes how a branch bears fruit. First it is pruned. How does pruning take place in our lives?
4. Secondly, it remains part of the vine. How do we do this? (v. 10) Which is more important in our discipleship - our behaviour or our relationship with Jesus?
5. Why are we to bear fruit?
6. What difference does it make that Jesus has chosen us rather than us choosing Jesus?
7. Share needs for prayer and pray for each other

Worship (15mins)

On a large sheet of paper create a vine which represents your cell. Draw leaves on the branches and write on them the things you would like to do to move on in your discipleship - as individuals or as a cell. Think about what helps you most in building your Christian life - bible reading alone, in a group, sermons, tapes, books, conferences, friends...do you need any help to move on - if so, in what area?

Play quiet background music and offer these thoughts to God.

Witness (40 mins)

Make plans for an event/social or plan an act of practical service which you could do together. Think of people who you could invite to your social event or to work with you in your act of service. Offer your plans to God in prayer.

Acknowledgements:

Jenny Baker, Jesus at the Centre, Session 3

Phil Potter, The Challenge of Cell Church Chapter 4

Creating Community

(Reality and Relationships)

The term "Cell" comes from the idea of the church as a body - a living organism made up of smaller cells which multiply and are vital to the life of the whole. Today we're exploring the third of 5 values which are key to healthy small groups in churches.

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Witness (20 mins)

- Are you willing to enter into an agreement with the others in your cell to be an instrument of God's love and to phone each member at least once in the next month to see how they are getting along?
- Finalise plans for your next social event/ act of service together - try to make sure the work is shared out - and people are playing to their strengths.

Acknowledgements: Jenny Baker, Exodus: Mission of God Ch 8

Welcome (15mins)

In silence consider the following situations. Who would you call if... (NB if you are married, think of at least one person other than your spouse whom you could call)

- You need money but can't explain why**
- You are at a crossroads in your life and need someone to talk to**
- You have a spiritual problem and need someone to listen and understand**
- You've had bad news and need a shoulder to cry on**
- You feel a bit low and need someone to cheer you up**
- It's 3am. You are in serious trouble. Who will get out of bed and come to your aid?**

If you are able, share your answers and explain the factors which governed your choices to the rest of the cell group.

Worship (15mins)

Write out the following bible verses about community on slips of paper:

Romans 12.10; Ephesians 4.32; Hebrews 3.13; Hebrews 10.24-25; James 5.16; Galatians 6.2; Romans 15.7; Ephesians 5.21; Colossians 3.13; Galatians 5.13.

Play some quiet music, pass the slips round the group. As you receive a verse, respond to it silently in worship asking God what he is saying to you.

Word (50mins)

Read Exodus 12.1-3, 21-28

1. The story of the Exodus begins with Israel as an oppressed generation of slaves, but ends as a nation. This is the first time that Israel has been referred to as a community although God promised Jacob that his descendants would form a community many years before (Gen 28.3 & 35.11) What has stopped Israel being a community up til now? What do you think now gives them a sense of community?

2. The following verses show the ways in which the community of Israel is distinctive:

At whose initiative are they a community (Deut 7.7-8)

For what purpose are they a community? (Deut 4.5-8)

What kind of community are they to be? (Deut 28.9-10)

How will they participate in their calling as community? (Exodus 19.5)

3. We are part of the church - God's community. Do we share these same characteristics? (1 Peter 2.9-12 may be helpful)

4. The word community is used four times in the chapter that the Israelites were to share together on the night when the angel of death visited Egypt before they were able to escape slavery. How have shared experiences deepened your sense of community? Is the African proverb true in your experience:

Eat and drink together

Talk and laugh together

Enjoy life together

But never call it friendship

Until you have wept together

5. Looking at the list of verses used in worship. Which would you say that God was wanting you to work on at the moment? Share prayer requests and pray together - Where people have shared a particular struggle or need pray for them first.

EXTRA (IF TIME)

6. Surveys show that Sunday church attendance is declining. Mike Riddell and others have commented that "the fastest growing sector of the Church in the West is made up of people who don't go any more"

Is believing without belonging an authentic way to follow Christ?

How can we offer community to people repelled by institutional forms of church?

7. "By this shall all people know that you are my disciples - that you love one another". In what ways can the love in a church or cell be significantly different to other organisations that it actually marks members out as Jesus' disciples?

Witness (40 mins)

Meeting you could be the only opportunity many people have to meet Jesus, and to see the difference knowing him makes. List the places where you interact with people who are not Christians. What do they know about your faith through what you say and what you do?

Identify 2 or 3 people whom you would like to pray for to come to know Jesus for themselves. Are there ways in which the cell group can support these people - or do activities to which they may be invited?.

Share needs for prayer for yourselves and your friends/ family/neighbours - and pray together.

Acknowledgements: Jenny Baker, Jesus at the Centre Session 6

Doing Evangelism

(Real Ways to Reach out)

Welcome (15mins)

These "evangelistic" signs were displayed outside churches in the states one summer.

Eternity - Smoking or non-smoking?

**Come in and have a
faith lift.**

and during a heat wave...

**If you think it's hot here,
just wait...**

How do you react to them? Are they accurate representations of the message of Jesus?
What is our message - what do we want to communicate about Jesus? List your ideas on a flip chart.

Worship (15mins)

Share some things that you would like to thank God for this week - and spend some time praising him. Include thanks for some of the things you listed on your flip chart.

Word (50 mins)

The word Evangelism means "Sharing Good News"

The Word Mission means "Sent"

Read John 17.13-26

1. Jesus said, "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world?" The Father sent Jesus, not in divine glory, but as a human baby, vulnerable and alongside those to whom he was sent. What are the implications for us in the way we "do evangelism"?
2. If you or your church were accused of being a "friend of sinners" as Jesus was. Would there be enough evidence to convict you?
3. Jesus totally identified with people - and yet remained the Son of God - He said of us - "They are not of the world, even as I am not of it?" (v.16) How can we do this in practice in the 21st century? Give some concrete examples.
4. Jesus said that the world would know that we are his disciples by our love for each other. Have you ever seen this happen? How do we love each other in a way which doesn't make us cliquey?

5. *"There was a part of me that secretly felt that evangelism was something you shouldn't do to a dog, let alone a friend"*

Rebecca Manley-Pippert (student evangelist)

What kind of approaches might make someone feel this negative about evangelism?

How would you like to see your church or cell's be "good news" and share "good news" in the local community in the years ahead?

Encountering God

Welcome (30mins)

Over a cup of tea or coffee, tell your group about your week since you last met. Describe it in terms of the weather, choosing a word that captures how you feel eg. muggy, stormy, unsettled, fine, sunny.

Pray for each other.

Worship (15mins)

Read John 1.35-51

Then let one of the group lead you in an Ignatian prayer exercise. Imagine that you are with John as he points out Jesus passing by. Listen as Jesus asks you, "What do you want?" Give him your own answer. What happens next?

Word (45 mins)

1. If you feel able, share something from the prayer exercise. How did you react inwardly when John said "Look the Lamb of God"? What was your response when Jesus asked you "What do you want?" Did you feel that Jesus spoke to you in any way through this prayer time?

2. Who did each person in the story think Jesus was?

John (v.36)

Two disciples (v.38)

Andrew (v.41)

Philip (v.45)

Nathaneal (v.49)

3. Whose views of Jesus changed as they encountered him? How? What caused the changes?

4. Try to remember how you reacted when you first heard about Jesus. How have your encounters with him changed your view since?

5. What do you think v.51 means?

6. What sort of expectations should a cell group have of encountering God together

Witness (20 mins)

Pray about any issues arising from the study and for those needs that weren't prayed for earlier.

Make plans for next term