



Three Dimensional Groups

1 Thess 2:8 So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us.

The former MGM Studios in Orlando was originally built to take guests on an experience through the movie making process. Billed as a true working studio, the attractions featured stunt shows, visual effects and several sound stages. It was truly an immersive experience.

One of my favorite areas was called *Soundsations*. This often missed attraction featured a demonstration of three dimensional sound. To experience, you would enter an isolation booth, put on a pair of headphones, close your eyes and be transported into the office of a movie executive preparing for his next big pitch. The five minute audio would have you convinced that an ice cold soda was fizzing in front of you while your hair was being trimmed by a barber.

I found an archived clip on YouTube if you want to experience it for yourself. I tried it on our kids and enjoyed watching them winch as their senses were fooled. <https://youtu.be/YOaZDqLq1rQ>

You and I live in a three dimensional world. We experience sight, sound and touch in a space that has length, width and depth. Remove just one of those elements and the world becomes flat and less enjoyable.

There is a phenomenon called "Spatial Hearing Loss". It is when hearing is lost in one ear and the individual cannot determine where a sound is originating or even separate a voice from background noise. Again, experiencing the world with the loss of dimension is flat.

Can you see a spiritual parallel?

It shouldn't surprise us that the kingdom is also designed to be experienced in more than one dimension. It is an error to let ministry become too singularly focused in one area. This past year, has brought a deep appreciation for a multi dimensional ministry. Even as weekend gatherings have been effected, it's the multidimensional ministries that have continued to thrive.

If your Sunday worship experience is taken away, do you still have a church?

Paul's letter to the church in Thessalonica is a reminder that ministry is so much more than just preaching. There is also fellowship, discipleship, corporate worship and practical ministry.

This is why strengthening the other core aspects of ministry is so important. Ministry must be multidimensional. Since it is our vision to be a large church made up of small groups, our groups must be three dimensional. Grace Groups are groups of two more that come together in organic, authentic relationships to ***reach up, reach in*** and ***reach out***.

1. A MULTIDIMENSIONAL GROUP REACHES UP

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them. Matthew 18:20

Yes, worship is a personal experience while at the same time it is also corporate. When we come together in groups, we must reach up and make room to invite heaven to come and dwell with us.

If we do not engage the atmosphere of heaven, we miss a key health element found in the gathering of two more.

Ways to reach up:

- Sing a worship song together. Use a prerecorded song or a single instrument.
- Share a testimony and then praise God for the good report.
- Pray in the Spirit together, share what you hear God saying. Make sure to write down those prophetic expressions and turn them into a corporate prayer.

Example from Ascend Young Adults:

In our young adult gatherings we often start off with a thought or scripture shared by one of our leaders. Then we go into a time of prayer with worship playing in the background. We close out that time of prayer corporately and then share and celebrate our wins in life or within the ministry.

2. A MULTIDIMENSIONAL GROUP REACHES IN

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17

Reaching up and connecting with heaven is important. Likewise reaching in and engaging with one another is just as important. God gave us a body of believers to encourage, edify and build one another up. This is a key reason gathering together is essential. Just as a physical body cannot live without being connected to one another, neither can a spiritual body of believers.

Ways to Reach In:

- Break up your small group into smaller groups of 2-3, ask introspective questions and pray for one another.
- Study a passage of scripture or do a devotional together.
- Have one-on-one contact on a regular basis.

Example from Worship and Creative Arts:

We reach inward by including a time of connection before rehearsals with a short devotion, testimony or a time of prayer and edification. We also utilize Basecamp to communicate the heart of the WCA pastor to the team as well as an outlet for team members to share songs, scripture or encouragement with the team. Our key leaders also work to cultivate relationships outside of rehearsals through fun training opportunities and fellowship and communication throughout the week.

3. A MULTIDIMENSIONAL GROUP REACHES OUT

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. Ephesians 2:10

The church's mission must align with Christ's mission. Christ came to seek and save that which was lost. Therefore His passion for evangelism must be in the DNA of every member and ministry of the church. This keeps ministry fruitful and focused. Remember every other ministry will carry on in eternity, the only exception is soul winning.

Are we willing to do whatever it takes to win as many to Jesus as possible?

Ways to reach out:

- Make it a point each meeting to refer to the empty chair.
- Plan an event that makes it easy to bring a friend.
- Host a block party.
- Partner and serve a local ministry.

Example from Women of Grace:

Our groups found unique ways to reach out this past year. One group has been a hand extended to a local ministry for moms and children by providing needed resources and support to "The Life Center". Another group continues to reach local nursing homes with a personal touch of support as well as providing for practical needs with supplies. And our "Community Sewing" group has blessed our local YMCA over the last two years with about 40 blankets they sewed as a group.

Questions:

- 1) Think through your regular event. Can you see those three dimensions of reaching up, in and out at work? What needs work?
- 2) Has your group become one dimensional? What is the cause and more importantly what is a possible solution?
- 3) How can creating smaller iron groups help foster healthier connection within the group?
- 4) What intentional reaching out elements do you plan to implement in the coming year?