

Small Groups: On What Basis?

The Bible doesn't say very much about church organization. It does, however, have much to say about the biblical function of the church.

"Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves." **Romans 12:10**

Functions: Commitment to fellow Christians, caring for and affirming them.

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love . . . Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ God forgave you." **Ephesians 4:2,32**

Functions: Being transparent, opportunity to exercise patience and bear with others in love, exercising kindness and compassion, forgiving others.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." **Galatians 6:2**

Functions: Listening to and sharing others' problems.

"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." **Ephesians 5:21**

Functions: Mutual submission to others' care.

"...let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God." **Colossians 3:16**

Functions: Teaching, admonishing, personal life application, praising God together.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up . . ."

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Functions: Encouragement, edification.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:24-25

Functions: Exhortation, personal life application, meeting together, instilling hope.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."

James 5:16

Functions: Confession, prayer, healing.

How many of these functions are fulfilled best by a large group format? It is important then, to look at the biblical functions of the church, and ask the question: "**What structure/size is most conducive to helping the church fulfill its biblical function?**". . . **Small Groups: The Biblical Basis**