

7 Ways to Help Others Find Hope and Healing

"Therefore He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, because He at all times lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25, MEV).

I believe that small groups are a vital part of helping so-called hopeless people find healing. One of the parts I like best about being in a small group is that you can pray for one another's "hopeless" cases.

We can lean upon the faith of others when we start to doubt.

In Luke 5, there's a great story of a small group of men who took a friend who was paralyzed and in need of healing to the feet of Jesus. In this account, we find seven characteristics of a small group that God uses to heal:

1. Compassion – This man was healed because his friends cared. It all starts with us caring about people who are hurting. Romans 15:2 says, *"We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord"* (NLT, second edition). God used these guys because they were sensitive to a friend's need. And he'll use us when we aren't preoccupied with our own needs and start caring more about others than we do ourselves.

2. Faith – The men believed God would heal their friend. Take a look at Luke 5:20: *"When He saw their faith, He said to them, 'Man, your sins are forgiven'"* (MEV). It wasn't the paralytic's faith that made him well; it was the faith of his friends. How many people do you know who are so paralyzed they can't believe in God? That's when we have to believe for them.

3. Intervention – These friends didn't just pray for their friend; they took action as well. It's not enough just to pray for someone who is hurting and caught in sin. We have to take

action. Jesus says in Luke 14:23, *"Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled'"* (MEV). There is a slew of examples in the Bible of people taking others to Jesus.

4. Persistence – We all get discouraged as we try to reach our family, friends and acquaintances with the gospel. But we can't give up! The friends in Luke 5 didn't let difficulties discourage them. It didn't matter that crowds were between them and Jesus. Galatians 6:9 says, *"Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not give up"* (MEV).

5. Innovation – These friends dared to do something different. It's pretty innovative to get up on a roof and tear it apart to get a guy to Jesus. Imagine the mess they made! Ministry is messy because it involves people. Small groups that won't step out of the box won't be willing to be messy enough to be instruments of healing.

6. Cooperation – Obviously, these men worked together to bring their friend to Jesus. It was too big of a job for one guy. It's the same way with small groups. People come to Christ faster when they do it in the context of a supportive small group. A supportive community is a powerful witness to God.

7. Sacrifice – Have you ever wondered who paid for the roof in this story? I think the group of friends did. They wouldn't just tear it up and leave it for someone else to fix. Whether it's time, money, effort, or whatever, there is always a cost to bringing someone to Christ. Luke 16:9 says, *"Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home"* (NLT, second edition). Small groups must be willing to make sacrifices if they're going to be agents of healing in the world.

Talk It Over

- What does hopelessness look like?
- Do you believe that no one is outside Jesus' reach? If so, what are you willing to do about bringing "hopeless" people to Jesus?
- What hurting friend have you been praying for? What can you do to take action and help that person heal? {eoa}

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