

ON A MISSION

Ps. Carol Ekinu – 28 August 2016

Modern Family Series

Sermon Notes



QOD: ***What is the one thing you have ever accomplished with a group that gave you great fulfillment?***

· Winning a game · Adventures · Awards · Development project · Buying land

Many great achievements around the world have been accomplished through teams or groups of people coming together to accomplish a certain task. Even the so called solo sports disciplines need coaches, doctors, managers etc. In fact, when we are a member of a team that works together, we can accomplish more than we can accomplish all alone.

- * When you pull musicians together, you get great music.
- * When you pull athletes together you get to play a game.
- * When you pull workers together, you get a business.
- * When you pull actors together, you get a play.

Illustration: Video: Ferrari F1 Pitstop perfection: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aHSUp7msCIE>

Acronym for TEAM: **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore.

Great things can be accomplished by teams. However what stops us from accomplishing great stuff together? It is not the really bad things; it is actually some good things that become the group's downfall.

1. **We just want to be friends.** However the nature of group dynamics is that, we want to be with each other so much that the value becomes just being with each other. That is fine, only that we are broken, and human. Once relationships have been established, and the need for friends has been met, that's the way an LG stays. When more appealing friendships or changes in life circumstances occur, like when we move on, or betray each other, or even misunderstand each other there is so much pain and heartbreak that we no longer want to be together and a lifegroup often dies out.

The objective of mere friendship kills the group's ability to accomplish much together.

2. **We want to go deeper.** Knowledge is like food, you keep wanting more of it. When you have too little of it, you're malnourished. When you have too much of it, it makes you constipated. Some of the tastiest bits of it may not be good for you in the long run. Some of the most boring, unexciting bits of it are the most useful for you. The objective of getting more knowledge can stand in the way of achieving great things in your group.

3. **We want TLC.** Sometimes groups can become consumers of services. Support groups tend to suffer from this. The groups tend to consume more emotional and other resources than they give. When the supply of TLC dries up then the group disintegrates, with nothing to show for it.

Qn: How can our LGs become purposeful without missing out on friendship, deepness and TLC?

Series Intro: This month's series is Modern Family. We are learning together what it means to be a thriving part of God's family. In the first week, Pr. Mike shared that we are born for influence and we looked at the disciples Jesus recruited and gave a vision of impact – the message was “surrender for a life of impact”. In the second week Pr. Enoch from the Teens’ church shared from Jesus’ lifegroup; that we can accomplish God's purposes with a diverse, authentic and missional group. Last week we learnt through Pr. Mike that community happens when commitment wins over convenience. What is the end goal of being in community?

Today, we come to the final instalment of this month’s sermon series, Modern Family and turn back to Jesus and his group of men. We want to take a look at what became of this group of people at the end of Jesus’ life, and afterwards. Let’s read Mark 16:15-20

15 He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well.” 19 After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God. 20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

What can turn our groups into missional communities of fearless influencers?

1. Mission Enhanced Friendships

Ordinary LGs focus on friendships as their goal. People are mostly seeking friendships that will spur them towards Christ. But I long for a community where you get together and go, "Hey, how can we help people?" A lot of LGs are like, "Hey, let's go for a movie. Let's go to the game; let's go shopping; let's have some fun. Let's go out to eat."

The danger in a LG aiming for community alone, is that it typically becomes the destination.

Jesus taught his group of people that they existed for community with “aromat.” The friendships were to accomplish something greater for God. Vs 15-16

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Missional Lifegroups are different in that they primarily see the purpose of their friendship, love, and unity as a conduit of God’s love to their neighbors. Your Lifegroup is about having new people in your meetings, at your dinner tables, attending your parties. We need to open up our lives. There are thousands of people in this city that will never come to a Mavuno Sunday service that will come to your house and have dinner with you. They don’t care about what we do here on Sundays. They will care about you, your story and your community. They will want to hear how Jesus has changed you. My one message: **Missional groups impact the world!**

Friendships are good, but they are much sweeter, more meaningful, more purposeful when they are enhanced by a mission that you accomplish together.

2. Obedience over Information

Many of us have been a part of a Bible study at some point in our Christian lives. Typically, these groups read the Bible for a set period of time on a specific day of the week. Bible studies are often great things, but they don't often constitute a missional community. So what's the difference? The short answer is that a LG on a mission is not a Bible study, but studies the Bible – V 15 & 20

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20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere,

It is interesting because Jesus did not send us to go dig deeper into the Bible so we can know more. Otherwise the great commission would have read something like "Go and learn more about Jesus." The directive was to go and introduce the world to him, every sphere of the world, every sector of society. And the disciples obeyed. **Missional groups impact the world!**

A Lifegroup on a mission is defined by engaging God's Word seeking to OBEY. Some of us have complained that our LGs are not deep enough! Sorry, but actually you are the shallow one who expects to learn without acting out your faith! Be the difference in this group by helping them become a deep and obedient community. I am not saying we should stop studying the bible, but to study the Bible without engaging in God's mission is a fool's errand. The purpose of studying the Bible is indeed to learn about God so we're conformed to the image of Christ, to equip us for the work of ministry in the church (community) and outside the church (mission field).

The rich young man in the bible.... He was convicted and walked away sad!

Illustration: roll of pictures of conviction/shame - is, is(1) & is (2)

Go and tell! Is it very hard to tell others that Jesus Christ has no equal? You don't have to be a Pastor to testify about what the Lord has done for you. (Tell how I got saved after several attempts like the woman in my village with her enticing snacks & talk of Mizizi week4 Gal.2:20).

Your story is unique from everybody else and it should point to Christ – *This is my story....*

I often wonder why someone would privatise their faith, yet someone introduced them to the precious gift of Christ Jesus.

3. Contributors beyond Consumers

Sometimes our LGs aim to eat life with a big spoon, becoming consumers of whatever life has to offer. When we need fun, we find a place where we can have that fun. When we need spiritual things, we call for the Pastor to come, then we do communion and we feel we have arrived. When we lose a loved one, we rally together to find spiritual and emotional help. The group becomes a net consumer of goods and services. I have sometimes heard – "I stopped going to that church/LG because it stopped meeting my needs. Is it really about meeting my needs?"

Jesus had a different vision about what it means to be community. He envisioned a community of net contributors. He gave them a promise which if they dared obey they would become contributors. V 17, 18 & 20

17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well."

20 Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.

The things that the disciples and others had “consumed” - healings, miracles, deliverance from demons and issues – they were now supposed to bring to others.

(Share my discovery and missions’ testimony).

The problem is, you don’t have a team of cheer leaders, you’ve isolated yourself. I wonder; why don’t you like the Christians you know? Why is it that you, a professing Christian would find no joy in people who find joy in what is your primary joy? Get out of your comfort zone; you need a team of like-minded people to walk with. **Missional groups impact the world!**

Five things to consider as we return to the drawing board:-

1. **Get involved:** If this is your church, this is where you worship, this is where you grow, if you're not using your gifts to be a contributor then guess what? You're selling yourself way short because we all have gifts and we all need each other. If you're only going to church, but not serving, then there's something that God wants to be done that is not being done. *‘When you serve others, God changes lives and the first life he usually changes is yours.’*

I also want to challenge those who’ve been visiting with us in the last 1 month and you like what you see but haven’t made any commitment, I challenge you to commit. Or, you may have been here much longer, but you’re observing what’s going on from the periphery and once you don’t like a particular sermon series or preaching Pastor you move to another church and return when a new series starts. You need to commit to one community so you can grow! Church hopping will keep you from achieving your mission and not serving will keep you shallow and mediocre for Christ! Stop looking for a fix – commit to a church, be consistent and serve.

2. **Church is God’s plan for humankind:** I believe, with all my heart that the way we’re doing things is actually messed up. I believe that the government is not the best-equipped organization to meet the needs of our society today. The community of the local Church is. As I watched the Olympics, it became clear that the church needs champion runners with unstoppable faith in what God can do when they obey!

3. **A bigger vision for our community:** - Mavuno church vision; plant churches worldwide by 2035.

i) A vision for our community that is greater than what we see today. I have a vision for a church that loves others more than we’ve been loved. Forgiving and being reconciled with each other.

ii) A vision for people who serve others more than we have been served. I have a vision for a community that gives more than they have received.

iii) A vision for a group of people so overwhelmed with the love of God that we love and accept people right where they are, and point them to a Jesus who will forgive, heal, and make them new.

iv) A vision for a community where every single person sees themselves as a part of the body of Christ, and they got gifts, and a calling greater than them.

4. **God is calling LGs to go out bring them in:** To reject that civilized, domesticated faith and to join Him as He passionately pursues a bride from among the neighbourhoods of Ntinda, Luzira, Ggaba, Nakawa, Naguru, Wandegaya, Gayaza, etc and the nations of the world. It will require risk, boldness and courage. And yet today Jesus is reminding us that who we are, is about something more than just “doing church” on a Sunday morning and eating doughnuts in our LG meetings – instead of community impact, you’re doing

life around teas – really? How far can tea, samosas, cakes, etc take you? Look around you and you'll notice empty seats each Sunday for all the people “out there” that God desires to bring “in here”. Are you ready to be a Life group on a mission? *A community of Christians, who demonstrate the gospel tangibly and declare the gospel creatively to those who aren't believers, in obedience to His Word. Missional community is intentionally focused on those outside the church.* Mavuno Juba has to happen because of your LG!

5. We are called to something greater: We do believe God has called us to something more than a self-centred mindset. We are not spiritual consumers. We are spiritual contributors. The Church does not exist for us, we are the Church, and we exist for the world. No matter who you are, you matter to God and to His Mission. Your LG involvement makes a difference. Your involvement is a game changer, whether you realize it or not. If you're not in an LG, this is your moment to plug in, you are a community away from fulfilling your purpose. Register today!

Mavuno church is not a club, our intention is that you would be known for something. While you are here, you should know God and your life should tell others about Him. If you truly believe that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life and He is not just a road, a path, but the way of life; why aren't you living that life?

Jesus intends for us to serve the world with His love even if it kills us! – *share Kigali struggles; loneliness, lack, general harsh conditions & yet today there's a thriving Mavuno Church transforming lives!*

The Pastors aren't here to make you comfortable; giving you the right sermon, the perfect worship and ambience so you're convicted! Huh, the disciples didn't follow Jesus in their hearts after being convicted; no, they obeyed and today Christians get to gather in communities all over the world to celebrate the amazing grace of God.

As I end, I must emphasise that none of us can achieve our mission without the help of others. (share the suicide story of Michael Phelps and the influence of Ray Lewis, former Baltimore Ravens line-backer and friend of Phelps; sharing his achievements before sharing the story.)

Illustration: roll pictures of Michael Phelps as backdrop.

Alone is so little an impact in this world! We'd not be hyping him as a swimming sensation if there was no one who pointed him to someone greater. You need others to achieve greater for you and for the group. Ask yourself, “What impact is my group meeting for?”

Tell your neighbour, “You are saved; so what? It's about making the difference in our world!” True religion is to sacrifice, giving to the poor etc. But this isn't about religion, but relationship with Jesus to abide in Him and therefore to bring Him praise. Obedience to Him is better than sacrifice although it involves sacrifice and hardships.

The strength of a group is the mission they live for beyond themselves. Mission is obeying the commandment in Mathew 22:37-39 that says to love God first and then to love your neighbour as you love yourself. Obeying this commandment and getting on with the great commission, is why we exist as a church – **we exist to turn ordinary people into fearless influencers of society**. Some of us are tired of doing missions, of serving and of discipleship; we've done it all and now think we've arrived!

Here is the test to find whether your mission on earth is finished: if you're alive, it isn't – Richard Bach

One day we'll each stand before Him and there'll be an account of our lives here on earth. Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is the progress and working together is the success! – God needs to

welcome you with a 'well done!' If you feel you've done it all, register to facilitate Mizizi and disciple others this September.

Paul tells us that after you've done all you can – stand; because “Almost doesn't count”! Be the game changer in your lifegroup! – **song: I need you survive (Project lyrics on the screen for all to prayerfully sing)**

Pray:

1. Pray confession of disobedience, spiritual consumerism, knowledge seeking, friendship seeking – It's time to start all over again! Psalm 90:12
2. Boldness for LGs to go out – Salt & light, Be the difference
3. Salvation

Note: Mizizi signups and facilitators needed for September intake

Family Fest outreach opportunity – 5 members each! As a lifegroup, multiply that number by the members in your LG and that's your target! Remember, together achieves more.

Benediction: THE FEARLESS CREED:

I am a Fearless Influencer...

My past is forgiven, my future is secure

My present is not for me, but for the one who set me free

The die has been cast, I have stepped over the line

No more prayer-less living, cheap giving & selfish dreaming

I am part of the change; I will not hesitate to serve

I will gladly pay the cost, contagiously spreading His love,

Playing my role on the dream team, the Mavuno family

Until all Africa is changed, every sector of society

I align myself to God's purpose, I will be who He calls me to be

I agree to be shaped & molded, through His word and through His family

Until my will and His will fully agree

And I become fully the influencer that I was created to be

I am a Fearless Influencer...