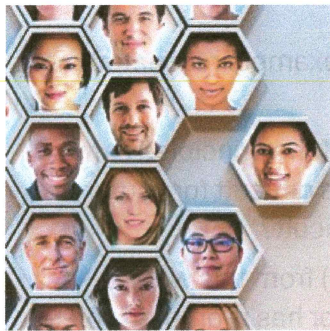


Why Small Groups? Part 1

The reason behind intentional Christian community,
by Carolyn Taketa

Churches use all sorts of names for small groups—life groups, growth groups, home groups, cell groups. They also use various models, numerous strategies for connection, various



plans for assimilation, and church-specific vision and goals for their group ministries. Yet all would agree that small groups are a means to an end, not an end in and of themselves. Small groups exist as a way for people to engage in biblical community that helps

them become more like Jesus in every area of their lives. The following are a few key biblical foundations, ministry purposes, and benefits of small groups.

Biblical Basis for Small Groups

God Himself is in a community of three persons in one—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—who exist in perfect unity. So it is not surprising that from the beginning, God created us to be in community with one another.

Genesis 2:18a (NLT) *Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone.”*

This passage is often used in the context of marriage, but it also speaks to our fundamental need to connect with others in the human community. What is striking about this statement is that God makes it before the Fall. There's no sin yet and no disobedience; man is in perfect intimacy with God. And yet, God declares that man is alone and that it is not good. Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian points out:

Community is deeply grounded in the nature of God. It flows from who God is. Because he is community, he creates community. It is his gift of himself to humans. Therefore, the making of community may not be regarded as an optional decision for Christians. It is a compelling and irrevocable necessity, a binding divine mandate for all believers at all times.

When Jesus' ministry began, He called 12 disciples to be His primary relational and ministry community. Did Jesus need this motley crew to help Him? Not really. But Jesus chose to love them, teach them, and pour Himself into relationships with them, thereby creating the first "small group."

The apostles continued Jesus' model and formed a community of believers who loved God and loved one another. Despite incredible persecution and against all odds, this rag tag group of Jesus-followers launched small communities (i.e. church) that proclaimed the gospel and changed the world forever.

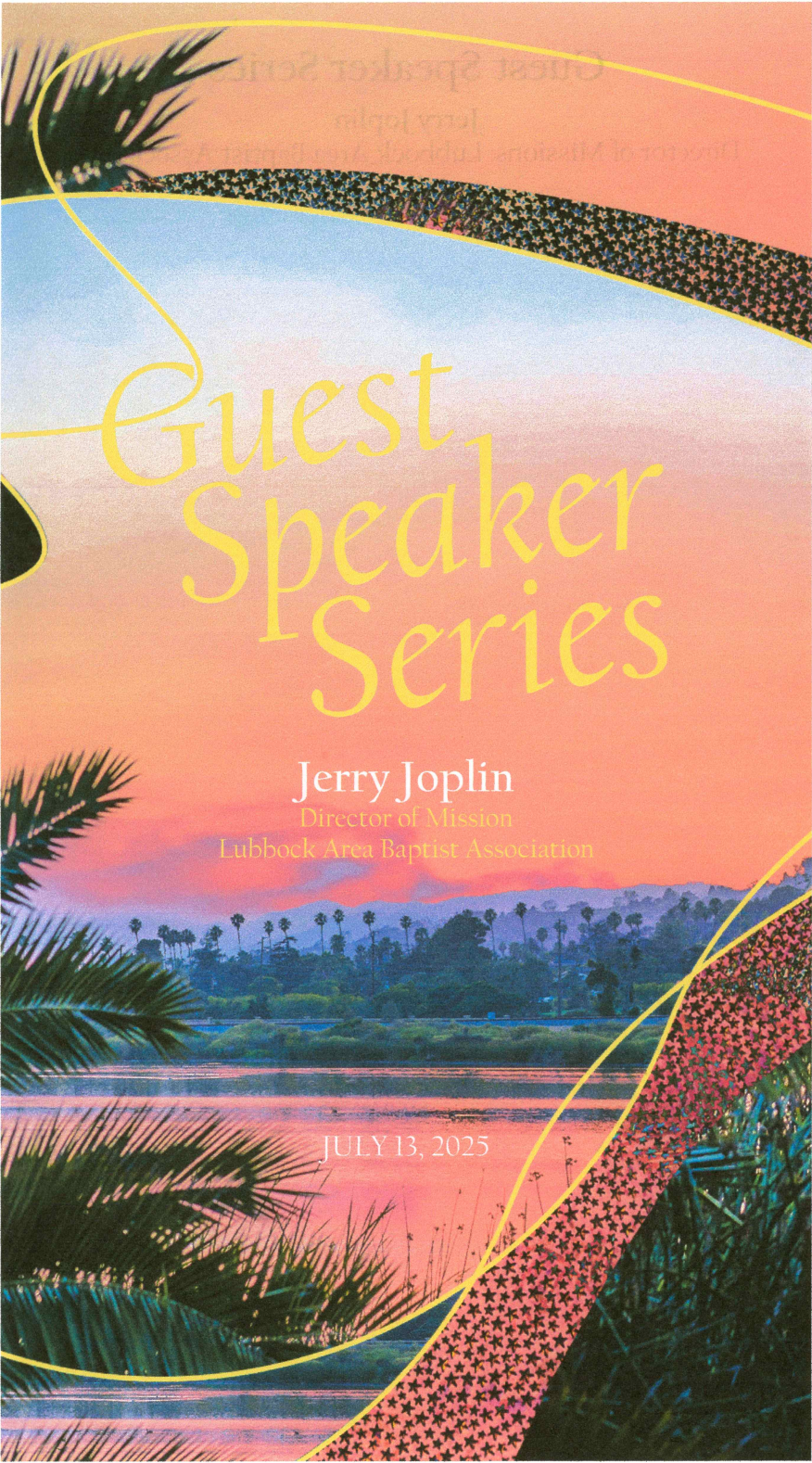
Ultimately, small groups are a way of living out our purpose, both as individuals and as a collective group of believers—to be the church. We'll talk about that next week.

Deacons on Call

John Harris and Jason Swann

Weekly Scheduled Events

- **WORSHIP:** Sundays at 9:45 AM
- **SMALL GROUPS:** Sundays at 11 AM
- **DEEP DIVE INTO GENESIS:** Next session **AUGUST 6**
- **FIRST KIDS:** Our next meeting will be in August
- **FIRST YOUTH:** See firstplainsyouth.com for summer events



Guest Speaker Series

Jerry Joplin

Director of Missions: Lubbock Area Baptist Association

Small Group Discussion Guide

1. If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Would you rather be hero or a villain? Explain.
2. Read the main passage given to us by Jerry. Is there anything from the sermon you would like to discuss?
3. What was your greatest takeaway or what stood out to you the most from this week's sermon?
4. What sermon illustration, story, or example resonated most with you and why?
5. Share a time in your life when one of the principles or main points from this week's sermon was difficult for you to follow or live out. Why was it so difficult?
6. As a group, share which Scripture(s) from this week's sermon God spoke to you through, or has prompted you to dig into further. Read those passages aloud and discuss them.
7. What action do you need to take to go beyond having the knowledge to applying that truth to your life?
8. How can we pray for your OIKOS?
9. When can we get together and have some fun together? Who's bringing the ice cream?

OIKOS by the NUMBERS

- **100** - The percentage of West Texans and Eastern New Mexicans who will regularly interact with a Christian this week.
- **95** - The percentage of Christians who chose to follow Jesus primarily because of someone they know personally.

OIKISM of the Day

- People will attend our church if **YOU** give them a good enough reason.