

# Why Small Groups? Part 3

The reason behind intentional Christian community.

*by Carolyn Taketa*

Over the last two weeks, we have discovered that small groups are both biblically based and purpose-driven. Today we examine a reason that you may not have thought of, yet it is quite powerful.

## Character Change Happens Best in the Context of Community

The consumer mentality rampant in our culture has permeated our understanding of community. We focus on what we are



going to get out of church or small group rather than what God is going to do in us and through us because of our relationships within community. We need each other to help us know the truth about who we are, who God is, and

how we can live in light of those truths. Like iron sharpening iron, the relationships we form within our small communities can become a tool for God to use in our character transformation. Dr. Bilezikian writes:

It is in small groups that people can get close enough to know each other, to care and share, to challenge and support, to confide and confess, to forgive and be forgiven, to laugh and weep together, to be accountable to each other, to watch over each other and to grow together. Personal growth does not happen in isolation. It is the result of interactive relationships. Small groups are God's gift to foster changes in character and spiritual growth.

We live in an increasingly fragmented and disconnected world. Though social media and other technology have made our world seemingly more connected, people have fewer genuine

friends than ever before. It feels scary and threatening to allow ourselves to be known or to invest in knowing someone else at a deep level. It is much easier and more convenient to stay on the surface. Yet when we take the risk of being authentic with a small group of people, we can experience God's grace and love coming through others, which leads to freedom and transformation.

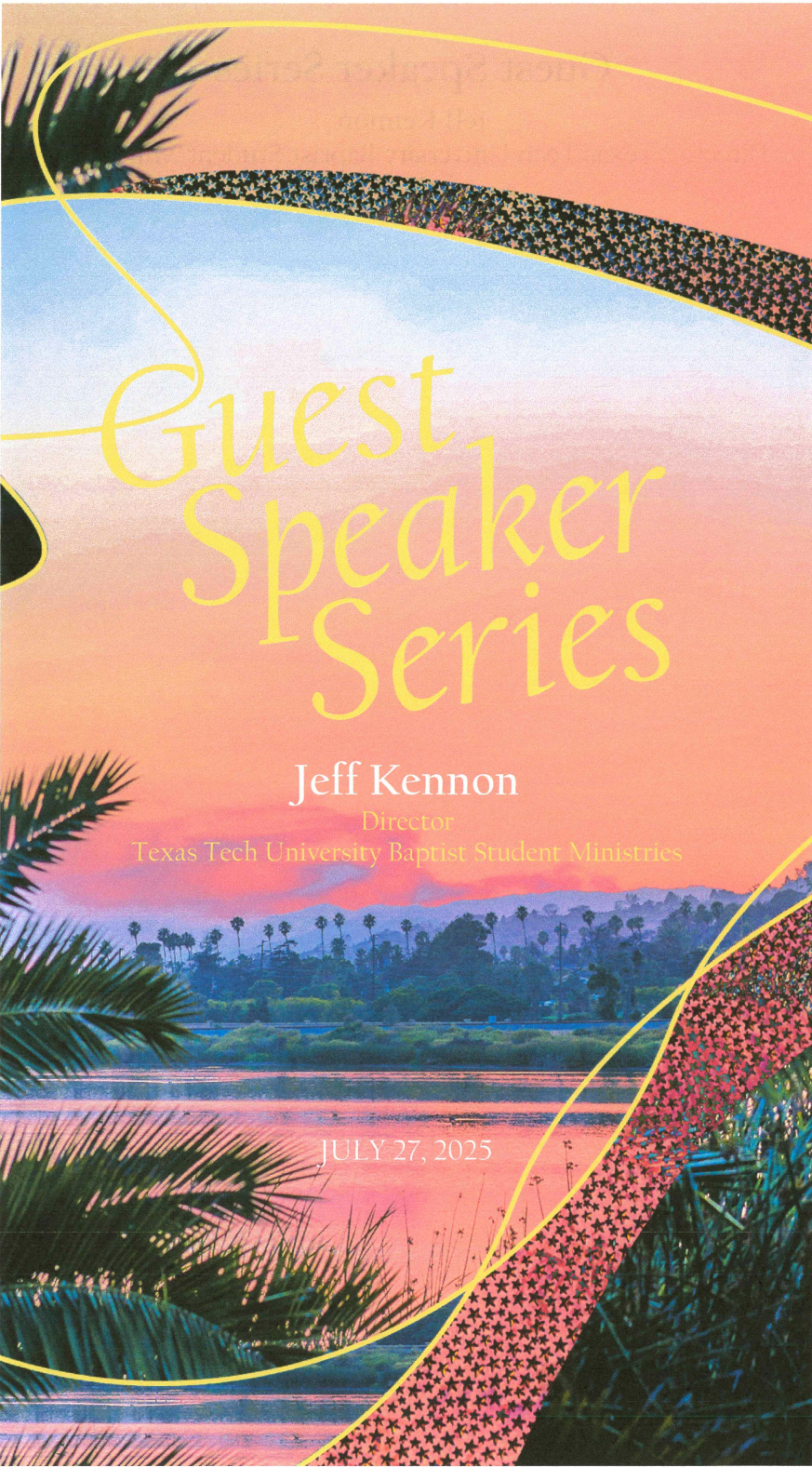
John Ortberg writes: "God uses people to form people. That is why what happens between you and another person is never merely human-to-human interaction—the Spirit longs to be powerfully at work in every encounter." So the goal of small groups is to create environments where Spirit-driven, life-giving experiences can flourish. While the type of group or study can help promote a positive environment, the real things that promote a healthy environment for flourishing are prayer, support, service, confession, worship, accountability, conflict resolution, social gatherings, and simply doing life together. Regardless of the specific guidelines a church may have in their small-group ministry, its objective ultimately is to help people engage in relationships that help them become more like Christ. Spend time building an environment that allows true relationships to flourish.

## Deacons on Call

Danny Bell and John Gray

## 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:** See you in August
- **FIRST YOUTH:** See [firstplainsyouth.com](http://firstplainsyouth.com) for summer events





# Guest Speaker Series

Jeff Kennon

Director: Texas Tech University Baptist Student Ministries

## Small Group Discussion Guide

1. If you could travel back in time and could have a meal with anyone in history, who would you choose? Why?
2. Read the main passage given to us by Jeff. 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? Who's bringing the Rice Krispies treats?

## OIKOS by the NUMBERS

- **1,700,000** - The approximate number of non-believers for every one believer in the world on the day Jesus delivered the Great Commission.
- **9** - The approximate number of non-believers for every one believer in the world as of this morning.

## OIKISM of the Day

- Church buildings aren't supposed to be landing strips, they're supposed to be launch sites.