

“While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house,
many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples.”
Matt 9:10

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer...They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts” Acts 2:42, 46

Sharing life, love, support, caring, warmth, truth, no pretense, accountability, faithfulness, the **GOSPEL**... all of these (and many more) describe community. In particular, the community, or better yet, the *family of God*...

It’s something that as children of God we long-for, don’t we? Do you long for this? I hope you do! There are times in my life where I can look back and point to moments where this was happening in all its glorious splendor, and it profoundly impacted my life!

So, *Oreland family*, how’s *family* life? I look around and see community happening in all different spheres: youth, kids, men’s group, women’s group, senior fellowship...

But what’s in common with each of these groups? Community life is happening *here* in *this* physical space, our church building that we call Oreland EPC...

Don’t get me wrong, this is great, and vital for every church family, but are we missing anything with ‘life’ only happening here? Perhaps...

If you stop and ponder; ‘Where does life happen?,’ it does and should happen here at OEPC, but what if that life grew and spread to the walls of our homes? What if *we* as brothers and sisters in Christ began to *open our homes* to *each* other?

There’s something about sharing life within the walls of your home that is vastly different to anything else. Do you agree? Not sure? Great!

The discipleship team is ready to propose the ‘Great Experiment...’ which is simply to give this a try over the course of Lent (the six weeks leading up to Easter: March 5-April 19).

Okay..., So what’s the ask?

- Are you willing to host a ‘connect group’ in your home?

- Maybe you're willing to 'host' but not lead?
- Are you willing to 'lead' but not host?
- Are you willing to lead and host?

Great! Then we're looking for you! The 'Great Experiment' is to find *church members* who may be willing to host/ lead a small group during the upcoming season of Lent...

'Sounds good,' but what's the commitment?

- As 'host' you would:
 - pick *the day of the week* and the *frequency* you'd like to host folks in your home *within* this six week window of time
 - *coordinate* the details (day of week, time, any food?)
 - if you want to 'lead' than you'd be asked to *choose* a book from the Bible, or relevant Christian topic to study that's *grounded* in *Scripture* and lead the discussion

If this sounds like something God is calling you to consider this, then please plan to attend a short informational training event after church on Sunday Feb. 2 in the fellowship hall. On Feb. 9 a sign-up genius will be set-up for the rest of the church to join and pick a group they'd like to join for the six week period.

Friends, God is moving in our midst and these 'connect groups' are a way to share life with one another and grow in our faith. Rosaria Butterfield in her book, *The Gospel Comes With a House Key* said this; "Let God use your home, apartment, dorm room, front yard, community gymnasium, or garden for the purpose of making strangers into neighbors and neighbors into family. Because that is the point—building the church and living like a family, the family of God."

We look forward to seeing what God will do in and through this 'Great Experiment!'

Blessings,
Pastor Dan and the Discipleship Team