

What's Not to Like About SGM?

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As I have stated before, I was a reluctant participant in the SGM workshop at Ferry Beach a few years ago. Now, after two years of our small group ministry (Chalice Circles), it is hard to believe the depths of my ignorance. In hindsight it really was a no-brainer. **As a co-minister of a growing congregation on the threshold of being a large church, I can say unequivocally that our decision to begin an SGM program was the smartest thing we have done in some time. Why? I can answer it with one word, "Ministry."**

Small groups provide another layer of ministry that exponentially increases the ability to touch those persons in our congregation seeking community and meaningful relationships in their lives. Recently I was in the checkout line at the grocery when a woman touched my arm and said, **"I just want you to know that your suggestion that I join a Chalice Circle has done me more good than any advice I have ever gotten anywhere."** I had to be reminded that she had come in for counseling and after listening to her for a while, I admitted that I really had no answers or miracle cures for her feelings of despair and loneliness. However, I suggested that being a part of a Chalice Circle might provide a space to be heard and affirmed. It had been three months since that encounter, and I had forgotten about it. She didn't come back for more counseling. She didn't need it. **She needed, and found a circle of friends with whom to be real.**

This is not an isolated example. **In the past two years, I have received many testimonials of joy regarding our Chalice Circle program.** I have also found it to be a channel of information that keeps me in touch with real needs about which I would otherwise know nothing. **I encourage ministers who are interested in growing a vibrant healing community to explore Small Group Ministry.** It will bring something new to your church.