

Romans 12

We who are many are one body in Christ.

Produced by the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church to communicate effective principles and practices demonstrated by congregations that are actively making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

These congregations are marked by:

- Clarity around the mission and vision of the congregation.
- Practice of spiritual disciplines, both corporately and individually.
- Nurture of growth in discipleship through mutual support and accountability.
- Cultivation of intentional and mutual relationships with the most vulnerable—the poor, children, the imprisoned, the powerless.
- Consistent concern for inviting people into relationship with Jesus Christ, combined with wise practices for initiating them into the Body of Christ.
- Connectional relationships that facilitate participation in God's mission of global transformation.
- Shared clergy and lay leadership.

Coffee and Prayer

Drakestown United Methodist Church, a small membership congregation in an upper middle class area of New Jersey, has discovered a unique way to connect with the community.

The church is located on a busy route where 500 to 1000 cars pass each morning and evening. Since March 2011, Monday commuters traveling past Drakestown UMC see people with placards and a tent. Every Monday morning from 6:30 to 8:00, no matter what the weather, the church's prayer team is out by the road—smiling, waving, offering free coffee, and praying for the community. At first commuters were startled, and the few who stopped reached for their wallets assuming this was a fundraiser. But the team assured people they were not collecting money.

The prayer team and congregation have been amazed by the response. Often someone will say, "I've passed you for a while now, but today I decided to stop." More recently, commuters are handing the team written prayer requests, then coming back days later to tell how prayers have been answered.

The Monday prayer team is composed of approximately six deeply committed people. Both team members and commuters have found blessings in this simple ministry of prayer and hospitality. Lives are being changed by the grace of God expressed in the love and faithfulness of a handful of disciples at Drakestown UMC.

Some Questions for Discussion

- Who are the people who pass by your church, and how do you touch their lives?
- How might you think "outside the box" to identify assets that your congregation has that could be used for ministry? How is the location of your congregation an asset for ministry?
- If a small group of people in your congregation feels they are led to develop a particular ministry, what are the roadblocks they are likely to encounter? How might those roadblocks be removed?

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