

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.

Kitchen Groups – Not About Cooking

Munger Place United Methodist Church is a resurrection congregation. The original congregation, founded in 1913 in a prosperous Dallas, TX neighborhood, closed its doors in 2009. Nearby Highland Park UMC took responsibility for renovation of the property and, in October 2010, planted a new Munger Place congregation.

The new congregation is very much alive, and while the legacy of the church continues it is also very different from the original. Munger Place Church has identified the following aims:

- Help people love God and love their neighbor with all they are
- Draw people to attend and bring their friends to worship
- Blend seamlessly into the neighborhood
- Value artistic excellence and welcome artists and musicians
- Attract a body of members who uphold Christian ideals and stewardship
- Be consumed with blessing the neighborhood, city, and the wider world
- Value transformation more than information and action more than words

This vision is expressed in the congregation's understanding and practice of church membership. They are clear with people who express interest in becoming members that at Munger Place "membership is not about what you get, but what you give. It is not about privileges, but about responsibilities."

One of the four expectations of membership is participation in a weekly small group. These groups are called "Kitchen Groups." Members meet in homes for Bible study, prayer, and discussion about "How is your life in God?"

Kitchen Groups are a contemporary adaptation of the Methodist class meeting developed by John Wesley in 1742. Like the class meeting, the Kitchen Groups are where members form relationships that help them grow in holiness of heart and life. New Christians learn how to read, study, and pray with the Bible. They learn how to open their hearts to grace through prayer and weekly sharing of how they are following the way of Jesus in the world. Kitchen Groups are discipleship incubators in the Wesleyan tradition.

Some Questions for Discussion

- What are the expectations of membership in your congregation? What support is provided to equip people to meet those expectations?
- What venues are available in your congregation for people to experience Christian community and hold one another accountable for their growth as disciples of Jesus Christ?

Steve Manskar is the Director of Wesleyan Leadership at the General Board of Discipleship. He can be reached at smanskar@gbod.org.



Romans 12 Newsletter. Issue #118. © 2012 GBOD. All rights reserved. Permission is granted to copy this newsletter for use in United Methodist congregations. This newsletter is provided as a service of the General Board of Discipleship and is funded through World Service apportionment giving by local United Methodist congregations.