

**Small Groups: An Approach To Enhance Spiritual Formation and
Community Within All Nations Church, Hampton, Virginia**
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ABSTRACT

Life-changing events can take place in our lives so simply and innocently that we do not fully understand their importance until years, even decades later. This was the case when, as a teenager in the summer of 1971, I attended a home meeting in northern Virginia. In this meeting, people of all ages gathered regularly to praise God, pray, study Scripture, and share refreshments. The members of that small group were sharing something deeper—their very lives in community with one another. I did not realize at the time that this was a picture of how the Church began and thrived in the New Testament; I only knew there was something very powerful in the experience.

Years later I began to hear of small group meetings sponsored by churches and held in members' homes. Through my theological training I realized the connection between the Early Church approach to ministry and the approach that churches were rediscovering today.

My journey has come full circle as I now seek to lead my current church through the path of community and spiritual formation that becomes awakened through a small group philosophy of ministry. The impact that this small group project has had on my ministry and my church assures me that small group methodology is not only a tool from the past used by the Church, but is a vital tool today for connecting with God, each other, and to society. Jesus must have certainly known what He was doing when He chose the small group model as a force that would unleash the power of the gospel to a dying world. The time for spiritual formation and community throughout the Church and society is needed again. Church leaders today have a

proven New Testament concept that is bringing new life in the Spirit to current congregations. I commend to you the model of the small group.