

My husband T.A. and I had two little boys ~ a preschooler and a baby. The year was 1982. We were attending the first church we'd ever been to that was Charismatic or Pentecostal. This was new to us, but we were intrigued to see that God really did talk to people today. The first Sunday we were there, the pastor made the regular announcement that everyone was encouraged to join a small group, and that we'd find the map and addresses on the bulletin board. We were so hungry for more of God that we immediately found one and joined it.

I also joined one that was for women. It was held on a weekday morning at the church. Babysitting was provided. Both groups were weekly and were run in the same way. The evening group did not provide baby-sitting, so we got our own.

The time was divided in half, with the first half being praise and worship. It was in this section that we would be sensitive to the Holy Spirit so He could speak something to us that would help someone in the room. Also if someone wanted prayer for something, then that person would sit on a chair in the middle of the circle, and those who wanted to would gather around and praise softly, giving the Holy Spirit opportunity to say what was needed to help this person.

The second half of the group's time was for Bible study. In this particular

church, the leaders had written up their own study material for us to do. We each had a 3-ring binder with a set of lessons in it. We were to do one week's lesson at home and come to the group ready to share our answers. We could discuss and question anything. Anyone could talk, but the leader made sure no one talked too much. We really liked it.

There were only a few rules in these groups. One was that there was to be no arguing. If someone said anything controversial or argumentative, we were not to respond! God would tell the leader if the person should be corrected or if he should just let it drop. Another was to never gossip about anything that was told in the group. This made it a very safe place to be helped. And we were prompt to end on time.

The first two testimonies I want to share here are showing that pride and fear will hinder God's working. In the evening group, a gal got a picture from God of an ambulance. She said it meant that there are two people here who really need help. No one responded. The leader asked her if she knew about in what area of the room these two people were sitting. She indicated right where T.A. and I were! The leader asked if it was us, and we both denied it. We said that nothing was wrong and we were okay. We didn't realize that we were lying. We'd both been raised that Christians always were fine and never had problems. False spirituality is what it was!

And, we were afraid of being prayed for!

In the women's group, one of the gals brought her mother-in-law and asked that she be prayed for. The lady sat on the chair while they prayed for her. She wept a little bit, but then never came back. We asked the gal who'd brought her. The mom had said, "It's too revealing." She, like us, didn't realize that God was wanting to help.

The women's group leader had a toddler, a girl who would wake up in the nights screaming. She explained that when she was 7 months pregnant she'd seen a demon one night in her bedroom. Of course it frightened her badly. She asked if we'd pray for her if she went and got her from the nursery. As we gathered around the girl on her mom's lap, the gals all were praying softly, waiting for the Holy Spirit to say something to someone. I was there, but was thinking that I wouldn't ever get anything. I can't hear from God, I had always said. But into my thought came the words, "I wash her mind in the blood of Jesus." So I spoke it out, and all the gals began to praise God for this. I was amazed. God used me!

In the evening group, T.A. got to be used for the first time. A young woman had asked for prayer. She said she'd lost her joy. As she was sitting in the chair with a group gathered around her, T.A. got a picture of what the problem was. He was scared to share it, so remained quiet. The

leader asked T.A. “Do you have anything?” That surprised T.A. greatly. He pulled the leader aside and told him what he saw. The leader said that this sounds like God, and to tell it.

So he did (very nervous and shaking). He said he saw a huge funnel up above her head, and the funnel was full of God’s joy. But under the tip was a block or brick with a word on it in black, bold print: ADULTERY.

The gal’s eyes and mouth opened very wide. She gasped, “How’d you know? I haven’t told anybody!”

The leader assured her that God knows, and wants her set free. Well, she confessed that she’d been seeing an old high school boy friend. The leader told her she was going to have to stop seeing him. She promised she would. She asked God’s forgiveness, we prayed, and the joy flooded into her. (T.A. and I were amazed that she thought her secret would remain hidden.)

There was a couple there who weren’t married. They sat very close together, obviously lovers. One night, T.A. got from the Holy Spirit that God wanted the guy to go back to his wife. He said it, and you could have heard a pin drop. They scooted apart, and were very quiet the rest of the evening. That guy was a friend, and came often to see T.A. at our house. Every time after that, God would have T.A. tell him something in

regards to going back to his wife. On one visit, the guy told about his son having problems in school, and T.A. told him that it’s because his dad is not there. And what was amazing is that this guy kept coming back. This didn’t run him off.

Many years later we visited a small group in another town. During the praise time, I got a picture of a man struggling with what looked like a huge beach ball ~ but too big to control. I shared it, and three men said that they were struggling with something too big for them. But this group hadn’t been taught how to pray for people. The leader said that they would pray for them at the close when they all joined hands to pray. I was sad because these men didn’t get the help that God wanted to give them.

We are so very thankful to God for those years in which we were members of a small group. We learned that we can be used by God in the spiritual gifts. We learned that God is a good God and wants to set us free from things we might not even be aware of. He’s the best Counselor! We learned that being open and honest is the way to grow up in our relationships with God, and benefit the most from a small group ~ as long as people don’t gossip. And that’s walking in love.

## *Why I Love Small Groups*

*Or  
Every Christian should  
be a in a  
small group.*

*Testimonies  
By Cheryl Boone*