



## Does your midsize group function like a 'class' or a 'community' – Sept./Oct. 2010



As I have studied midsize groups I have diagnosed several “diseases” that can erode the quality of a group ministry. My DVD training on *The Ten Deadly Diseases of Midsize Groups* provides a great check up for midsize group leadership. The first disease I address, however, is what I believe is the most prevalent of all the diseases. In my opinion this disease is the natural default of what a midsize group is usually reduced to, if not coached otherwise. Whether you call your midsize groups Sunday school, ABFs, Life groups, etc., the most prominent disease is when a group is reduced to functioning as a “class”.

In a nutshell a class can be described as a place where people go to be taught. Classes tend to be a “one man show” built around the teacher. The teacher leads the opening. The teacher probably leads the prayer time too. The teacher teaches the lesson. The teacher might even bring the treats and make coffee! (If there are any). Whole denominational Sunday school environments are struggling with this disease today.

In a new book I co-authored the *Group Building Guide*, I provide a wealth of practical ideas of what a community life looks and feels like. The first chapter defines a class and a community and gives key characteristics of each. Here is one example:

In a class, the teaching segment has the primary role, and everything else is pretty much optional. As long as the teacher has taught the Bible lesson, the class expectations have been met. In a community, the role of the teaching ministry is a vital part of the greater life of the group, but the group doesn't revolve around it. The group life also highly values sharing, testimonies, the prayer ministry, group activities, and other ministry opportunities. (Page 12)

The bottom line is first, I believe the teaching ministry has a greater impact when intentional relationships are encouraged as the one another passages of the New Testament are practiced. Second, when the leadership is shared, as opposed to a teacher doing everything, more people feel group ownership.

The ABF Philosophy creates a leadership infrastructure that encourages “community life” starting with the community leader position that oversees a leadership team and works with the teacher. The community leader can invest the time guiding the leadership team, planning the group life segment of group meetings and coordinating the overall ministry. Other leadership team members' are appointed to oversee care opportunities, socials, outreach events/projects, the prayer ministry, assimilating newcomers, coordinating small groups, coffee/treat schedule and we could go on and on.

If your church could use help sharing a 'community life' vision check out the *Group Building Guide* and the just released DVD teaching lesson, *Does your Midsize Group Function as 'Class' or a 'Community'?* This 29 minute lesson can help your people understand the differences between a class and community. Go to [www.abfresources.com](http://www.abfresources.com).

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