

What to Do.... (If peace does not

Over the years I have had mixed reviews as to how my groups have ended. Some ended well...no problems, others not so well. I've gone the full gamete from ignoring completely the nagging feeling that all was not well, to talking only to my co-leader, to pursuing peace for the person(s) who ended the group with a level of disappointment.

I have come to realize that not all discord is quickly evident. Some develops slowly as group members return home and begin to "chew over" their group experience. Group can take on a powerful/dangerous perspective once members are away from it and the community it provides.

In *Waking the Dead* John Eldridge says, "It (group) will reveal where you have yet to become holy, right at the very moment you are so keenly aware of how they have yet to become holy. It will bring you close and you will be seen and you will be known and therein lies the power and therein lies the danger." (pg. 197)

So how do you want your group to

reign as you finish



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end? Do you want to pursue continuing relationships? Will your group have a natural flow into life? Are you to be a part of that flow? You could discuss these questions within your group before it actually ends.

Yet, how do you pursue peace for/with others when that nagging feeling tells you, "All is not well"? It's over. Is it too late? No. Following are a few suggestions that I hope will be of value to you as you pursue peace as group ends.

1. Ask God to bring clarity to any persistent nagging that keeps roaming around in your head and heart.
2. Pray over what God is telling you about it. Where is the truth? Where are the lies?
3. Pray for wisdom and the person(s) who you know is disrupted.
4. Talk with your co-leader about what you are beginning to understand.
5. Prepare your own heart as you pursue peace. Pray for a heart of understanding, kindness (Romans 2:4) and love for the other person.
6. Be a willing listener, accept their reality for now, avoid a power struggle, be honest and extend grace as you move into their unsettled heart.



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SALTS Couples Report

Many people have inquired how the couples groups went at SALTS and we asked Victor and Ellen Oelsen from New Braunfels, Texas, to give a personal report on their experience.

What were you hoping for?

Victor: I was hoping that God would bless our marriage by uncovering whatever it was that was causing a wedge between Ellen and I and our inability to connect at a deep level.

Ellen: I was praying and asking God to renew and revive a vision for our marriage. I was hopeful for new understanding of what true intimacy of my heart with Victor could be. Our marriage needed resuscitation -- I was stuck!

What stood out to you?

Victor: The "Digging Deeper Exercise" helped me really hear and understand my wife's pain for the first time. By having to repeat back what I heard in each step and how it made her feel, I was not able to argue my point or make it about me. I had heard bits and pieces of my wife's story before but never in a small group setting where I was sitting across from her, looking into her eyes with this kind of intensity. I believe I really heard and felt her story for the first time in our group and it was a big factor in our breakthrough at SALTS.

Ellen: The exercise that impacted

me the most was the forgiveness exercise. The week began with a foundational task which involved both of us sharing our hearts in a gentle, non-threatening way. Each session introduced a new exercise which built upon the previous one, eventually culminating in a forgiveness exercise. The content helped me gain further insight into my wounds and how I am reacting to my husband out of my pain. In addition, it helped open my eyes to his wounds and how my behavior can harm him. I cannot express in words the depth of feeling I had in my heart for my husband. Listening well and being heard were keys to our breakthrough. These exercises were vital to learning how to do that with each other.



The group experience in this context was significant. To find my voice in the midst of many and be responded to with grace and truth was empowering and left me wanting more; more of a community of accountability and presence -- more true intimacy.

Victor: I knew before we left for Michigan that our leaders would be excellent and there would be no hiding from them. My counselor advised that since there was no hiding that we needed to jump in from day one at 100% intensity. God honored that strategy as it set the tone for the whole group to be able to be safer so we could get a lot done. Our male leader was firm with me and

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