

Essential Ingredients

As I have aged, I have had to make some adjustments to my activities and hobbies. I can't run like I used to. I'm not as strong, not as flexible, not as awesome as I was when I was younger (and I **was** awesome...just ask me!)

So I've had to make some changes in my activity levels. Even though I do it begrudgingly (I hate to admit that I'm old now), I need to make these changes that better reflect where I am in this season of life.

Since there are now a lot of sports that are dangerous (at least for me), I found that golf seems to be the safest. So I began playing more after I turned 50. I'm not any good, but I still enjoy it nevertheless.

Fascinating game, golf. No one plays it exactly the same way. Every person swings the club a little differently from everyone else. Everyone who plays golf has a unique approach to the game, even though there might be a host of similarities. Some people swing the golf club beautifully; others swing the golf club like someone trying to swat a fly with an axe.

But while every swing is different, there are some common elements that every good golf shot will have. Elements that must be present, regardless of whether the swing is pretty or ugly. The face of the club has to be in a certain position; the club must travel in a certain path; the ball must make contact with the club face in a certain spot. Common elements work to insure that the ball will travel in a straight path where the player is wanting to ball to travel.

Over the last few weeks, we have begun discussing the work of the church (making disciples), what the church has in place that has the potential to be a powerful force in that work (the small group), and how that potential affects the role of the small group leader (to taking on the work of a discipler).

The process of making disciples in small groups will vary. The people in the group are unique, each person being in different stages in their spiritual journey in Christ. The leader is unique, equipped and gifted by the Holy Spirit differently from other small group leaders. Put all of that together, and the result is that each small group is going to be making disciples in a way that is not identical to any other small group.

However...just like in a golf swing, there are always going to be some essential ingredients, essential disciplines, essential practices and rhythms, that every

small group and small group leader must supply for each disciple being made. That's because they are found in Scripture; God has made them vital for every one of us to more effectively follow Jesus.

A few weeks back, I had asked our small group leaders to identify at least five of what they considered to be essential ingredients of becoming an effective follower of Jesus. While described in different words, there was a general consensus that included in the essentials were:

- ✓ Daily Bible study/Bible reading
- ✓ Personal and Corporate prayer
- ✓ Accountability/mentorship
- ✓ Church attendance
- ✓ Serving
- ✓ Community with other believers

Those are six areas that you as small group leaders said were essential. As the Lord's called leader of your small group, what does **your** list of essentials include?

If you haven't done it yet, make your **own** list of essential ingredients. Feel free to use these listed. Use all of them, or some of them, or identify your own (just make sure you can justify it biblically).

In your work of making disciples of those in your small group, you might find such a list to be pretty helpful.

Now...what to do next?

That will be the focus of next weeks article...