



MentorNet #70

“We Started Small Groups, but they Didn’t Multiply. So Now What?”

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We are often asked in North America, “*Why don’t our small groups multiply?*” To sustain multiplication, your church must form three distinct types of cells, just as New Testament churches did: **seeker**, **seeder** and **feeder** cells. Church-reproduction movements in pioneer fields include these three simultaneously. North America churches typically include the first two in the third, effectively stifling them. (In the diagram below, the word *multipliers* refers to mature believers who prove passionate about multiplication.)

	Seeker Cell	Seeder Cell	Feeder Cell
Made up mainly of...	People who need Jesus	New believers	Maturing believers
Duration...	Short-lived (members become a <i>seeder</i> cell when baptized)	Lasts until members run out of friends who respond to Jesus	Indefinite
Hosted by, normally...	Seeker like Cornelius, Lydia, Levi, Zacheus, or a new believer	New believer, normally	Mature believer
Led by...	New believer , mentored by a multiplier, or a multiplier’s apprentice	New believer , mentored by a multiplier, or a multiplier’s apprentice	Mature believer
Chance of reproducing...	Nil (folk do not yet know Jesus), although other seeker cells may start	High , provided that the new leader is being mentored by a <i>multiplier</i>	Seldom multiply enough to sustain a movement but can mobilise multipliers
Objective...	Receive the living Christ (not just learn facts about Him)	Sow gospel seed among friends and start new seeker cells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edify maturing believers • Keep non-multipliers out of seeker and seeder cells
Main activities...	Partying as Jesus did, with activities to gather folks (games, barbecues, sports, outings) and testimonies by new believers, prayer for healing, etc.	Learning to obey Jesus’ basic commands , loving one another and starting lots of seeker cells	Bible study, fellowship , mobilizing for ministry, commissioning multipliers
Common hindrances...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of losing of control. • Trying to push camels through the needle’s eye (Matt. 19:24). • Teaching dogma prematurely. • Going directly to feeder cells. • Wasting time trying to force <i>feeder</i> cells to multiply. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of doing what Jesus and His apostles did. • Jumping the gun by taking folks into <i>feeder</i> cells before they finish reaching friends. • Failing to embrace their cell as the spiritual body that gives them their main pastoral care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overly talkative and attention seekers. • Excessive monologue. • Discouraging multipliers.
Remedies...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Shake the dust’ where camels fail to enter through the needle (find responsive folk: Mark 6:11). • Risk doing what Jesus and His apostles did — let seekers gather friends to meet Jesus and hear what he is doing among them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let new believers who are family heads do at once what God requires of all family heads: shepherd their families and close friends. (You are neither ordaining them nor naming them as elders.) • Multipliers mentor the new leaders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obey the New Testament ‘one-another’ commands. • Dialogue instead of monologue. • Plan members’ weekly ministry and encourage multipliers. • Start another group when numbers rise.
Helps & examples...	Send examples of how you have successfully gathered a seeker cell to GPatterson@mentornet.ws, and they’ll be posted in a MentorNet message.	Helpful materials & guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train & Multiply®: www.trainandmultiply.com/ (proven) • Paul-Timothy studies (free): www.paul-timothy.net/ • How to mentor new leaders: www.MentorAndMultiply.com/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few need help with this, as most churches already know how to start and sustain <i>feeder</i> cells. • Almost all books on church growth advocate for feeder groups.

Additional resources

- Order G. Patterson’s *Church Multiplication Guide* from a bookshop or at <www.WCLbooks.com>.
- To subscribe to *MentorNet*, or to download earlier messages, visit <www.MentorNet.ws>.