

## **Evangelism is Key to Deeper Fellowship in the Faith Community**

**By Bob Young**

Many churches believe that if the church becomes actively involved in evangelism, it will dilute its sense of community and undo existing friendships. Many churches have some kind of small group program or ministry. Few churches believe that small groups should seek to be evangelistic. The common belief is that evangelism and deep fellowship are mutually exclusive.

My experience is just the opposite. A church or small group can receive new people and still maintain healthy, meaningful relationships. Research shows that churches that reach out and continually incorporate new members develop a more biblical view of the faith community and experience deeper fellowship. New people bring numerical growth. New people also bring spiritual growth—fresh faith, new insights, expanded opportunities to minister and grow.

A church with a clear commitment to evangelism is encouraged to work together to reach out. This common goal brings unity and fellowship. The giftedness of the body is needed and used – some meet people easily, some have the hospitality gift, some have the “cherry pie” gift. Some have the gift of teaching, others the gift of persuasion. Evangelism is the work of the body and every gift is important.

The result is not diluted fellowship, but deeper fellowship that easily reaches out and assimilates new believers. Love and appreciation develop as church members work together. The discipleship level of the church increases as others are brought to Christ. Today’s broken society is less in need of friends and more in need of a loving family. Understanding this simple truth shows the value of inviting others to experience the shared faith community. Bring others to the activities of the church family; encourage them to see firsthand the fellowship of faith.

The body of believers that mutually commits to evangelism will experience deeper fellowship. Helping people experience the faith family provides a natural entry point for receiving the broken and helping them toward wholeness. Every activity and ministry of the church can and should think evangelistically. Think about it! In the final analysis, the glory of Jesus will not be seen in the world by our worship, our songs, our prayers, or our spiritual disciplines. Jesus will be glorified by those who keep his words and fulfill his commission.