

Two questions, one obstacle that side-track most Small Group Ministries

Small group Ministry is all about people. Day in and day out at Saddleback Church I could spend the majority of my time dealing with people and mess. After all, that is why we went to Seminary—to deal with people. People aren't an interruption, they are why we exist! So, here is the question, in a ministry filled with people, *when* and *can we* say “no” to the people God set before us. I know for me it is a consent struggle.

I was looking through the book of Luke the other day and saw a cool leadership point that Jesus so delicately walked—one that every small group point person and pastor walk each day. In Luke 4:42 to 44 we see a part of scripture where Jesus was ministering to people. He was a huge success, so huge that we see Jesus withdrawing from the people. Scripture even says “they tried to keep him from leaving”. Jesus response was in essence, “no”. I must keep moving.

Now imagine the people. They wanted their agenda fulfilled. I am sure they used everything within their power to persuade Jesus to stay with them. They saw an opportunity to keep their happiest high and the miracle man with them. He was the hottest show, the person to have. I'm sure they use guilt, shame, every form of persuasion known to man...maybe even a few adult temper tantrums because they weren't getting their way. But Jesus was clear, there was a bigger picture!

What was his big picture, his mission? Well you see it through the book of Luke. Luke 9:51, “Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.” Luke 13:22, “teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem.” Luke 17:11, “now on his way to Jerusalem.” Luke 18:31, “we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophet about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.” Luke 19:28, “going up to Jerusalem.” What was his mission? It was Jerusalem!

Nothing was going to stop him. Even with so many moments with people, they weren't going to side-track his mission. The micro wasn't going to mess up the macro. So, two questions for you to stay focused in Small Group Ministry. What is your Jerusalem? How do you love the people that get in the way of your Jerusalem? Don't let moments mess up your mission!