

Simply Diving In

A young couple in the Austin area, he a musician, she a homemaker, both Christfollowers, began meeting with a few friends and some not-yet-Christians in their home on Monday evenings. They ate, prayed, laughed, and shared life.

A Bible verse discussion time was where they found truth for living. Someone always had a worship CD or an “I-saw-God-at-work-in-my-life-this-week” experience and another had a kid’s Bible story.

The homeless needed food...single mothers needed beds for their kids...missionaries needed Bibles...there was always some way they found to give a hand-up. Unbelievers who came saw the gospel as well as heard it.

This group became HIS Hands, Heart, Voice, and Compassion in their slice of the world.

They had no church name, no permission but God’s, and no church planter training.

But they were joining Him in transforming lives though this simple passionate community.

- Any Christfollower can grasp the elemental truths about the nature of a simple church rather quickly,
- then spend the rest of their lives sharpening and living-out what they’ve learned
- among many groups of overlooked friends.

An “Aha” Moment: As a child I was extremely hesitant about getting in water over my head. Though I went to pools and lakes with family, I limited my participation to shallows always. I couldn’t swim and thought it was just too risky to learn...wouldn’t even try.

Then a lifeguard told me he could teach me to swim in two minutes! Though I only half believed him, that caught my interest. He assured me he’d taught scores of kids to swim very quickly.

Okay...I gave him a chance. Sure enough, he helped me to see and do the basics...kicking, paddling, breathing correctly...and within moments I was swimming! It wasn’t as difficult, drawn-out, or threatening as I had imagined...pretty simple actually.

Was I a good swimmer? No, I was just a novice, but I was swimming...out of the shallow water, diving, dunking, and having a great splash with my friends. Over the years I’ve gotten more skilled, but overcoming my own mental block was the biggest hurdle. Why did I think it was so difficult, so impossible for me?

The parallels for Christfollowers who think they can’t “swim”...gather and lead a simple church...are too obvious.

Yes, you can grasp the basics quickly. Will you be great at it? Probably not.

But the Spirit doesn’t need, or want your greatness anyway. HE is the real power and guide.

(continued)

The Bible gives permission for any Christfollower to initiate the birth of a church.

Read: 1 Peter 2:9, Romans 16:3-5, Colossians 4:15, Matthew 28:19-20

Weren't these truths given to all of us Christfollowers? What do they say about you and your own qualifications and opportunities? What kinds of spiritual gifts do you have? How could another Christfollower join or assist you in birthing a simple church? Who may have led the church in Lydia's home after Paul birthed it and left? (Acts 16:15) Who led in the jailer's home? (Acts 16:33, 40)

Simple Example: Most evangelists believe a person can grasp at least a basic understanding of what John 3:16 means, accept Christ, and be profoundly changed in one conversation. Though thousands of books have been written about "evangelism," the livable truth of it is refreshingly simple. We know that God's Spirit is the real force at work in a person's heart and life.

Grasping the basics of "how-to-be-a-church" together is also just as uncomplicated. If you are a Christfollower you don't have to go to Bible College, be ordained, read a thick book, go through ten steps, be certified, or get the state's permission to become the Body of Christ, the Church, in your circle of relationships.

Though thousands of books have been written about "church," the uncomplicated, refreshing, life-changing, livable truth about it is also profoundly simple. God's Spirit, again, is the real guide and power at work in making it "church." All you need is His Spirit, a "Paul" for wise-counsel, and a grasp of the simple basics.

This website shares some examples, all true to the Bible. Ask the Spirit how to reshape these rhythms of church-life among your own circle of overlooked friends.