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## *Have You Found Yours?*

**An article from the *Cathedral Times*  
by the Rev. George M. Maxwell, Jr.**

I didn't decide to become an Episcopalian.

I was born to Episcopalians, and I grew up in the church. Being an Episcopalian always felt like an ethnicity to me. It wasn't something I chose. It was just something I was.

So, it was interesting to me that for a little more than ten years, I found myself in a men's group facilitated by a Presbyterian minister. There were other Episcopalians in the group, of course, but we met in a Presbyterian church and there were more of them than there were of us.

It sounds strange now to talk about the group this way because it didn't take long before we didn't think of ourselves as Presbyterians or Episcopalians. We were just us. We were just all there being church.

We got together early on every Wednesday morning. The format was simple. We drank coffee, read the scripture set for that week by the lectionary, talked about what was going on in our lives, and prayed for each other.

We might have done a lot of analysis in the beginning. I'm sure there was some recreational arguing going on. It was a men's group. I don't really remember.

I do remember many of the stories we told about ourselves, though. We shared our laughter and our tears, our joys and our sorrows, our successes and our failures. And, we became friends.

I also remember getting better at asking questions, and swallowing the advice and opinions I would normally offer. Curiosity and conversation were more helpful than figuring things out or coming to any resolution. Learning was more valuable than teaching.

Even if we started talking about something abstract—something somebody had read—the conversation always moved away from the work itself and settled on how the person had been changed by reading it.

It's funny, really. We didn't go there to talk about our feelings or to become emotionally vulnerable. Again, this was a men's group. Those things just happened along the way.

There was something about listening to each other's stories week after week that taught us how to trust each other. It gave us a sense of belonging to each other. It's not often that you have a chance to talk about what matters most to you with people who actually care.

I still think about the group. My experience there has led me to join other similar groups, and to facilitate some of them. I'm not sure that church would be church for me without those small groups. They are the heart of my spiritual life.

Do you have a group like this?

We're starting a new program year at the Cathedral. Many small groups will be gearing up again after the summer break, and others will be starting new. Now is a perfect time for you to find a group, or start one.

I would be happy to talk to you about how.

Just remember, we are here to change the way we live, to generate different kinds of relationships, to create and enjoy real friendships. We do this by studying scripture, engaging in various liturgical practices, serving others, and practicing various kinds of prayer.

But, it's in small groups that we really learn what being in right relationship means. It's there that we learn how to become friends with God.

So, have you found yours?

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