

CYCLIST CHURCH

...a ride-up “parking lot church” for cycling enthusiasts!

Weekly Gatherings include some or all of the following:

- hydrating and talking bikes/rides/gear (community)
- refocusing for the week on God’s awesome creation & ways (worship)
- finding some way to help kids, sick, or hungry people...projects (missional)
- a Bible truth that helps with everyday living (discipleship)

...all bikes are ok with us...fast/slow/new/old/cool/rusty...as long as you’re on it!

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We come together every week for about 30-45 minutes at:

Time

Place

For more info contact

Some cyclists connect with 1 or 2 friends during the week and dialogue about all or some of the following ideas for mutual encouragement:

1. What is your biggest struggle this week?
2. What God-verse are you trying to live by or carry with you each day?
3. Are you taking some time alone to talk things over with God everyday...if not, what crowds this out of your life?
4. Who are you trying to show Christ to this week by your actions, words, or sacrifices on their behalf?
5. How Christ-like have you been in the following areas: (please be transparent as you share about each item, but avoid sharing inappropriate details, being judgmental, or rationalizing wrong behavior):
 - (1) have your words, actions, and treatment of others honored Christ?*
 - (2) have you trusted God in a matter rather than worrying?*
 - (3) have you turned your failures over to His forgiveness?*
6. Are you practicing being thankful in all things? 1 Thess. 5:16-18, Rom. 8:28
7. Pray for each other and each need mentioned

Cyclist Church

...how sincere Christfollowers can birth a “where-we-meet-to-ride” Body of Christ among cycling friends as an extension of the ministry of their church

Picture how you would reshape this “possibility story” for your group & cycling community:

based on the dynamics of greenchurch, a similar gathering but for non-riders, which has been meeting in a middle-class suburban parking lot and touching lives for over a decade...read articles 5 & 7 of their story at www.greenchurch.info

As Kyle turned into the parking-lot on his bike he saw Jon & Kara unloading their own rides...always there early to help him. This twenty-something couple had been in church a lot as children, and now God had made them hungry to find those spiritual roots again. They always tried to ride together on weekends since schedules were so hectic during the week...and, until recently, they just hadn't bothered to make time for church at all.

But a few months ago Kyle mentioned to them and a few other friends that he had been thinking deeply (praying of course) about starting a faith gathering for cyclists...nothing too long or formal, but a group that was sincere about loving God, and loving people.

He wanted to have a weekly “meet up” where they could share not only their passion for riding, but also their ups-and-downs during the week, their on-going journey with Christ, and their desire to make a difference for struggling people in the world. Jon & Kara liked what he was doing... it seemed like God had prepared their hearts to pitch in and help with this little “cyclist church” that had started gathering near their favorite route.

While they started putting out bottled water Kyle was texting a couple of regular riders. Four first year school teachers, some triathlon buddies, a hardcore endurance guy, a tandem pair and their neighbors, and three college students were soon leaning against Jon & Kara's car or their own bikes while they compared energy drinks and told about riding mishaps. Most had actually started coming to the gathering through some connection with Jon...the most avid cyclist of the whole bunch. Each person had filtered into the group over a period of weeks...coming initially out of part curiosity/part heart-hunger...and they all found something meaningful there.

Kyle waited until a late rider got settled then he asked the usual question:

“Okay everybody...where have you seen God at work this week?”

There were a few short answers about nature, children, and private devotion times, then the endurance guy, often kind of quiet, opened up about his current job pressures and how a Bible verse had given him deep peace as he was preparing for a difficult staff meeting...he got emotional about how God had spoken directly to him through that specific scripture. Everybody got quite...a bit in awe of how God works so precisely in our lives...it felt like worship. Jon stopped the dialogue and led a prayer of thanks right then.

Kara handed out a business sized card to everyone with a single Bible verse printed on it. She offered to make these each week so riders could carry a Bible truth with them all week long. Kyle asked if someone would read the verse and share what it said to them personally about **God, Self, Others, or Life**. And then he stayed quiet for a few minutes. A teacher spoke...then the tandem couple...then Kyle...and for 15 minutes they were all answering back and forth about what God was saying to them through that single verse. Very engaging, until Kyle finally wrapped things up with the challenge to truly live by this verse during the coming work week.

Before everyone climbed on their bikes a triathlon guy gave a quick update on the groups “shoes for kids” project that was scheduled for the week before school started. Ten pairs had been collected and the teachers would be delivering them to struggling families in three weeks....still time to bring a pair if anyone wanted to help some kids feel good about themselves on the first day of school!

Yeah, it seemed a lot like a Romans 16:3-5 church to everybody there!

All the adults admitted that they wouldn't miss this simple little gathering. It encouraged them personally, but it also gave them a means of helping others, in Christ's Name. The group was always praying for or doing something for someone!

Note: Bicycles are not what draw people! Only God can draw people together, and HE does that through prayer and relationships, not events/food/advertisement/signs. Bikes just get you connected with the people whom HE has already been preparing for a faith group like this.

HOW TO BEGIN

**...Just 2 or 3 Christ-followers (and their not-in-church friends) can become a life changing “where-they-ride” Body-of-Christ!
...They become HIS Heart, HIS Hands, HIS Voice, and HIS Compassion in their cycling community.**

A. Start with prayer! (Don't skip lightly over the Biblical ideas in this paragraph).

Ask God to arrange encounters between you and any cyclist friends/acquaintances/strangers in whom HE has been stirring up a deep spiritual yearning. This only happens through your praying & God's connecting you to the persons HE already sees who are spiritually hungry! Pray about this everyday for 2-4 weeks.

If no connections arise then have an hour long retreat with God...read “Finding the Person God Has Made Hungry” Acts 16:7-14 at www.greenchurch.info...Lydia knew about God, but was not yet a Christ-follower...she was searching for life's true answers. God knew how to connect Paul and her...keep asking God to connect you with someone like that...the not-yet-Christian or inactive Christian who is already looking “toward” God...watch for persons like “Lydia”.

You and a Christian friend or two can become the core of the group, but don't let this become just a cozy club of Christians. Keep praying and sharing with whomever He brings your way until some are ready to journey with you in this group...it only takes a few. Jesus said 2 or 3 persons are enough for Him, Matt. 18:20.

*Trust His Spirit to connect you to the right persons, and to have their hearts open. Don't be overly anxious and substitute events to draw a crowd...just wait on HIM to connect you to the God-hungry persons! Their circle of relationships will be what draws more persons in. **THEY WILL INVOLVE THEIR CYCLING FRIENDS!***

B. When two or more persons are ready, begin meeting weekly.

1. Gather at a parking lot, pavilion, home, park, café, picnic area, ...wherever the group will naturally gather.
2. Seek to be a living expression of the Body of Christ at the very first gathering. Without using “churchy terms” you can guide the group to be HIS Hands, Heart, Voice, & Compassion by how they live. (see 5 rhythms below)
3. A group like this tries to live out five basic rhythms together: (every item might not occur every week, but including each one regularly nurtures spiritual growth and balance)

~ **Be really good friends.**

Encourage the group to tell (1) what God is doing in their lives, or (2) what the world is dumping on them each week? Guide them in praying for each other. Be an example of meeting with 1 or 2 during the week for mutual encouragement (use some or all of the seven questions on page 1).

~ **Worship God** in some sincere way.

Find natural ways for them to experience and talk about God's greatness, power, or love every time you gather? Could they look at a picture of a mountain, the ocean, or a face and see the hand of God there? Is there a Bible verse about God that would remind them of His great love for their lives? Does someone have a worship song/video they want to show on their laptop?

~ **Learn & Grow in living** the truths Jesus taught.

Pick a Bible verse (or verses) each week, about Jesus, that you want to discuss as a group. Ask the group, “What does this say to you about **life, God, others, or self**...and how do you intend to live this week because of what this verse says to you”? You guide the discussion to keep it on track, but let each person answer and talk openly.

~ **Help others**.

How could the group regularly help other people in some way? Do a project for kids, sick, or hurting persons. Volunteer together at a “Helping Event or Ministry Site” in the area? Help riders see how they can be a Good Samaritan to someone?

~ **Share Christ’s Love & Good News** with others.

Ask a participant ahead of time to share their own journey-to-Christ. At every gathering ask God to continue arranging encounters between current participants and others in whom He has created a heart hunger for the person of Christ. **Always be authentic, never false**, in caring for another person. Be sensitive to their needs. Never manipulate. Include and value each one.

C. Ask God to give you a “Paul” and an intern

Seek out a mature pastor who will be your prayer-supporter and give you wise counsel regularly. Keep yourself accountable (2 Tim.2:2).

From day one begin praying for an intern that you can equip to lead the church. God might send someone to you before the church starts who is spiritually faithful and who just needs you to stay behind the scenes and mentor them for a few months. Or, the intern might come later and become your co-laborer, or your replacement. Spend extra time with your intern. Pray for and encourage him/her. Let God begin to shape and use them...its good to invest yourself in persons and more cyclist churches.

D. Focus on Christ-centered relationships

Always challenge participants to be passionate servants of Christ rather than turning to events and attractions to keep them interested. They will follow Him! Your faithfulness to this gathering will grow their faithfulness. Be steadfast!