



## PLAYING AS A TEAM GROUPWORDS

When Michael Jordan re-entered the NBA in 2001, there was a new and unusual rule enforced during a Washington Wizards basketball scrimmage: a no-shooting rule for Jordan. This rule was put in place because in one exhibition match, Jordan's teammates found themselves standing around waiting for him to perform.

The next day, Jordan and coach Doug Collins put the rule in place. As Jordan explained:

*Everybody wants to sit back and watch. But one [reason] why we became successful in Chicago was that we had to play as a unit instead of just watching. What makes me more effective is other guys stepping up and being a threat. If I'm the only threat, then I'm doing all the work. Obviously, that's not going to work.*

Jordan remained committed to the no-shoot rule, even when the outcome of the scrimmage was on the line. Someone passed the ball to him with his team trailing by one point with less than five seconds on the clock, but he didn't take the open shot and passed the ball back.

I'm sure you've heard it said, "Christianity is not a spectator sport." A minister friend of mine put it well:

*I believe to an extent, we are all "called out" by God to be ministers, but I am certain there are some of us he has prepared early in life to follow the path of lifelong, full-time ministry service.*

Small Groups are a wonderful place to answer God's "call" to ministry. Some are gifted to lead groups. Others graciously open their homes to groups. But the whole underlying purpose of a Small Group takes the "spectator" dimension out of the picture. Rather than sit around waiting for the Small Group leader to perform, the very size of the group (small) allows the unit to function as a true team. Sharing insights, supporting thoughts, confessing difficulties, affirming, encouraging, loving, and building up one another.

Sometimes, as a Small Group Leader, I will quietly and personally enforce the "no-shoot rule" on myself. The point being — the goal of the Small Group is for everyone to have a place to talk, laugh, cry, love and be loved by their Small Group.