



TRUE “TAKE HOMES” GROUPWORDS

Think for a minute about what some have called “*Integrated Learning*.” In our setting this occurs when the Preaching and the Small Group discussion are linked in the learning process. It is a powerful way to organize our church community around the Word of God. On one hand, the preaching and worship on Sunday provides a “*big picture*” approach to God’s Word. Then through the week the congregation takes greater responsibility for their own learning, as they take the Sunday theme into their Small Groups in practical discussion.

Often a sermon will end with final lessons or “*Take Homes*.” By combining the Small Group discussion and the previous Sunday worship theme, the “*Take Homes*” can be made even more real. We really can take them into our homes for discussion and prayer.

Sermons can convey the personal and practical implications of Scripture only to a degree. The primary limitation is the preacher/worshipper ratio, which can be 1:100 or 1:1000, depending upon the size of the congregation. With all of his skill, diligence and wisdom the preacher can still only work on the wide-ranging level as he tries to communicate (lecture) to a large audience. He may be extremely equipped to uncover the meaning of the text, but he still must communicate to the “average” church member. He can’t speak directly to Tom or Mary.

With integrated learning, the sermon sets the stage so that the Small Group can do what the sermon cannot do — speak and listen, present and discuss — and ultimately make extremely specific application to a group of 10 to 12 individuals.