



PORTLAND
fellowship

Dear Fellowship Partners,

update February 2010

For the past three years I've been involved in a unique group of men that get together in my neighborhood to discuss life. We call our group "Finer Things" taken from an episode of the show 'The Office'. Our group is comprised of four generations of men and a variety of experiences, struggles, and perspectives. Two of us experienced the pain and grief of the death of our children, a couple of us are dealing with unemployment, and all of us are children of God working out our salvation. From the beginning, we made it clear that Finer Things was a place to be honest, process life, ask hard questions and not be criticized for any of it.

It's rare to have opportunities in everyday life to ask questions about things that generally are not allowed to be questioned. Simply asking questions can provoke strong negative responses in others especially when it is expected that the person asking should know the answer: the pastor asking "Where is God?", the far-right Republican asking "Could the Democrats be right on this?", the missionary asking "Is my role even necessary?", or the Bible school student asking, "Is the Bible really true"?

I'm thankful that Portland Fellowship is like Finer Things. We have a clear mission statement and unwavering core values. Yet within that framework, we offer the freedom for people to struggle with their belief and their feelings. Just last week I had an appointment with a 16 year-old boy of a prominent leader in our community. From our first few minutes of meeting it was apparent that he agreed to meet with me to appease his father. But his resolve to live a gay life was evident both verbally and nonverbally. He professed to be a Christian, yet saw homosexuality differently than what his church taught. And although he professed Christ as Savior he shared with me that he doesn't know how to have a relationship with him. At this point in his life the relationship with his boyfriend fills this felt need.

This young man didn't need a debate. He didn't need to be told he was wrong and to get in line with the true teachings of Christ. What he needed was someone to listen to him to hear his heart and meet him there in his need. As he shared his perspective, it was apparent that his relational needs were so profound that he was willing to compromise his relationship with his family, his church, and with God.

Drew wrote a great article last month's *Fellowship Message* called "Looking past the 'what' to see the 'why'" that emphasizes this point when he reflected on Proverbs 27:7, "A person who is full refuses honey, but even bitter food tastes sweet to the hungry." This proverb is a powerful anchor for discussion with people hungry for relationship. As I continued to talk with the 16 year old, we talked about the deeper needs of his heart. It didn't take long before he shared the desire to know God in a deeper way. He reflected back, only a year, when he had a hunger for the Lord, but openly acknowledged how the world and his friends have



"He has sent me to bind
up the brokenhearted to
proclaim liberty to captives,
and freedom to prisoners."

ISAIAH 61 : 1

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become his interest. The rest of our time had nothing to do with homosexuality, but rather about our Father who is madly in love with us and about his desire to embrace us, even in our defilement. In our short one hour, defenses came down, possibilities rose, and a seed of hope was deposited in his spirit.

I'm glad our Father in Heaven is okay with honest questions. Thomas, the 'doubter', questioned the most crucial truth in all of Christendom, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. If there is anything you should be square on, it is the Resurrection. Yet Thomas said, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side, I will not believe it." Jesus, didn't give him a look of disgust or dismissed him for his doubts, but rather said to him. "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

My hope and prayer is that we as leaders will model Jesus' compassion and grace by meeting strugglers where they are in their process as well as lovingly lead them to trust and believe in the knowledge and love of Christ. I hope you, our friends and supporters, will continue to join us in seeing lives redeemed and like our 16 year old prodigal, find their way home to the Father.

In His service,



Jason Thompson
Executive Director



the hope group

As you may have read in previous newsletters, Portland Fellowship's Family and Friends ministry, now *The Hope Group*, had its first "re-launched" meeting this last month. This was a great time of fellowship, learning, sharing, and food! Each month we will be meeting on the third Friday of the month to share a meal, discuss a relevant topic, and share our hearts through discussion and prayer. This is a great place to ask questions, share pain, and receive hope and comfort!

If you have a loved one who has adopted a gay identity, or who is struggling with same sex attraction issues, please join us! The topics that we will be discussing for the next six months of the year are...

February - Acceptance vs. Approval
March - Relinquishment
April - Hope and Expectations
May - Prayer and Intercession
June - Roots of Homosexuality
July - Guilt and Shame

Contact drew@portlandfellowship.com for more information.

prayer

...for continued growth of the financial base of support that funds all of the services and our staffing needs.

...for those who have left Portland Fellowship. Pray for those who continue to trust God and for those who have lost their way over the years.

invitation

We are so grateful for the financial support we receive at PF, and we also value your participation to engage in the amazing work God is doing here.

There are several opportunities to partner.

Here are just a few:

- **Serve on our Board of Directors**
- **Provide food/snacks for our programs**
- **Share about PF with your pastor**
- **Host a House Party for PF**
- **Write your story for our newsletter**
- **Join staff and participants on a hike...**
- **Help us with janitorial or house work.**

If you want to learn more about any of these opportunities, please contact us.

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events calendar

february 19

Family and Friends Group
For those who have a loved one involved in homosexuality and want guidance, encouragement, and personal support.
Third Friday of each month: 7 p.m.

tuesday nights

Taking Back Ground
Discipleship program for men and women struggling with unwanted same-sex attractions 7-10 pm

thursday afternoons

Upper Room Community
Intensive training for our Upper Room Community members.

taking back ground retreat

Our 2010 retreat will be at Breakaway Lodge in Gearhart March 5-7. If you are an alumni or current member of TBG, please join us. Call to register.

Check website for additional updates at www.portlandfellowship.com