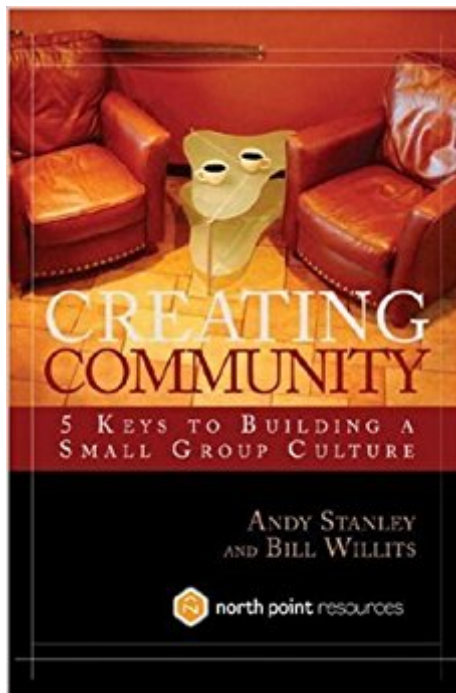




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# Creating Community: Five Keys To Building A Small Group Culture



## Synopsis

In *Creating Community*, Andy Stanley and Bill Willits take you on their amazing journey of developing the small group culture at North Point Community Church. They reveal their five key discoveries about what it takes to create a compelling small group ministry. These discoveries have helped connect almost 8,000 people into North Point's adult small groups. This is not just another book about community; this is a book about strategy—a strategy that builds a small group culture. *Creating Community* shares clear and simple principles to help people connect into meaningful relationships. The kind God desires for each of us. The kind He uses to change our lives.

**Small Groups That Succeed.** Small groups are the key to impacting lives in your church. But a healthy small-group environment—one that fosters meaningful, lasting connections—doesn't just happen. So pull up a chair. Let's talk about how to make it happen. Bill Willits and bestselling author Andy Stanley share their successful approach, which has resulted in nearly eight thousand adults becoming involved in small groups at North Point Community Church in Atlanta. Simply put, the five principles clearly described here have passed the test. Put this proven method to work in your ministry and enjoy the tangible results—God's people doing life TOGETHER.

**FRONT FLAP [Head]:** Small Groups. Big Change. “The small-group program at North Point Community Church is not an appendage; it is not a program we tacked on to an existing structure. It is part of our lifestyle. We think groups. We organize groups. We are driven by groups. *Creating Community* contains our blueprint for success. And I believe it has the potential power to revolutionize your own small-group ministry!”

• Andy Stanley Story Behind the Book *Creating Community* flows out of the North Point Community Church story. The message here is not just some new small group program, but reflects a passion lived out and implemented in their church from the very beginning. Even with phenomenal growth, the church has stayed true to its commitment to small groups and has fine-tuned its ministry process into one of the most unique and effective models in churches today. Andy Stanley and Bill Willits have put these successful principles into this new book with the hope and prayer that pastors, churches, and leaders will put them into practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

**Andy Stanley** Andy Stanley is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary and the founding pastor of North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia, with a youthful congregation of more than 16,000 on three campuses. Andy is the author of the 1998 ForeWord Book of the Year finalist *Visioneering*, the bestsellers *Like a Rock* and *The Next Generation Leader*, and the recent *How Good Is Good Enough?* Andy and his wife, Sandra, have two sons and a daughter. **Bill Willits** Bill Willits is the Director of Group Life at North Point Community Church. Bill is a graduate of Florida State University and Dallas Theological Seminary and has previously served on other church staffs in Atlanta and Dallas, Texas. His most important small group consists of his wife, Terry, and their daughter, Bailey.

This is a wonderful book about creating a community, and not necessarily in church. It's so easy to just go to church and follow the motions without ever REALLY becoming connected. Creating a community inside the church is what God intended for us to do. In order to work together effectively, you need to know that you can rely on your church family and be able to trust and confide in them. It takes work; it's not something that just happens. This book leads you deeper on how to allow that to happen. My husband purchased this book when we were hosting small groups at our house and we had the best session that we'd ever had (and we hosted groups for SEVERAL sessions prior to this). People opened up and told their testimonies and it was because there are tips on how to break the ice and make it easier to open up. No one wants to open up and become vulnerable in a group of people they don't really know, but it's almost necessary. We highly recommend this book if you currently lead, are thinking about leading or are starting to put small groups together. It's not something that you will regret and it will help you grow in your faith and friendships more than you could ever imagine! [https://www..com/dp/1590523962/ref=cm\\_cr\\_ryp\\_prd\\_ttl\\_sol\\_2](https://www..com/dp/1590523962/ref=cm_cr_ryp_prd_ttl_sol_2)

This is a well-done and practical resource for creating a church culture that supports growth in small groups. The principles here have helped NorthPoint grow to a church with a tremendous participation level in small groups. I read "7 Practices of an Effective Ministry" by two other NorthPoint staff, and there is some substantial overlap between the two books. This book starts with the author painting a Biblical picture of mankind's need for connectedness. It may seem like too much of what you already know if you have read other books on the topic of loneliness/community/connections, but it does effectively present the need that NorthPoint meets through their group environments. From here on, the book is extremely practical, focusing on different principles for "building a small group culture," as the subtitle says. It builds on learning done by organizations in the business world (need for clarity of the organization's goal, building an effective strategy) and refers to successes had and decisions made by the author's own church, so it is grounded in reality, i.e., what is working. It is presented in a way that doesn't say, "This is the only way to do things. Do it this way." - but in a way that allows you to take what lessons they have learned and implemented and put them in your own context. I think this is a great resource for church leaders, and if the principles were followed, as a whole we would probably be seeing a lot more success at both reaching unchurched people and developing church people!

People need people. This book does a wonderful job demonstrating biblically that Jesus desires community for His people. His will is that the church model the only true example of 'unity in diversity'. This is something the world erroneously seeks to achieve without God and Christian ministries many times struggle to achieve for lack of a successful strategy. Laid out in these pages is a thought provoking series of questions and some proven solutions which sow seeds for effectively developing a scalable culture of community within any body of believers.

I am a big fan of Northpoint and Andy Stanley. They are a shining example of a mega-church that really holds up small groups. I love their slogan: life change happens in a circle. This book will show you how to get them into circles, and what to do with them once they are there. Most importantly, they will show you how to divide those circles to create more circles. The two pages on the pastor's role in cheer leading groups is worth the price of the book. Josh Hunt

Teach Like Jesus

Creating Community is an interesting book, a big idea book. Reading it is like taking a tour of NorthPoint's small group ministry. The tour includes the feel for the required environment and

leadership participants. It includes glimpses into the planning and formation of this "Small Groups" church. There's also a peak into review and reformation when changes are needed. As a big idea and invigorating planning book it succeeds, however, this book alone will probably not provide a blue-print for constructing a small group ministry. It will certainly inspire the framework and growth of small group ministry!

The authors here provide insightful food for thought. I understand that few churches can operate like Stanley's but this book provides a great resource that can help you or your church leadership consider how small groups might work in your church setting. There are also helpful conversations about mission, vision, and system approaches to ministry. I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Great book for those beginning small groups and thinking about authentic Christian community! The book is filled with good life stories and experiences that connect. It is a great way to think through the difficult task of creating smaller communities within larger ones.

I give this book 4 stars based more on what the book is not, rather than what it is. Largely because of the cover, back cover, etc., I expected this to be a very nuts-and-bolts dissection of how North Point -- and in turn, any church -- can put together, execute on, and flourish within a small group structure. I was disappointed in that regard; while there's a lot of practical information, there's never (in my opinion) a clear, front-to-back explanation of how North Point does small groups, A-to-Z. What made this book better than average, though, was the appendix set full of helpful forms and suggestions. The book is, however, a wonderful treatment of the motivation behind small groups, Scriptural support for the approach, and a wealth of information about how North Point handles their overall small group emphasis. As I said earlier, the only problem with any of this is the mismatch between the actual content and what I think most people are expecting the content to be.

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