



Small group members decide to stop feigning interest in each other

OWENSBORO, Ky. — A small group from Rolling Hills Christian Church arrived at a place of unprecedented honesty with each other last Tuesday when they discovered that nobody in the group actually liked anyone else.

“We all realized, ‘You know what? I don’t care for any of you, and I find your kids annoying,’” says one man who was present.

The moment of openness came while they planned their annual small group camping trip.

Some disagreed over dates and camping locations, until one man finally said, “To be honest, I don’t relish spending any extra time with any of you, especially not a week-long trip.”

Others voiced their agreement and several people applauded.

“It hurt so good,” said one participant. “I felt huge relief at not having to pretend to like these people anymore.”

The discussion progressed as people revealed what they disliked about the others.

Marty, a middle-aged unmarried woman, was singled out for being too socially needy and bringing up the same prayer requests she’s had for the past five years. The group was also tired of praying for her “unspoken request” which everyone knew was to find a husband.

The Perez family was blasted for allowing their children to run around the house unchecked and eat the adult desserts before the adults had a chance to eat them.

“I made the loveliest pumpkin cupcakes one time and the kids inhaled them in about thirty seconds,” says one woman. “From that point on, I just brought store-bought snacks.”

Everyone voiced annoyance at the homeschooling family but couldn't find a specific reason to, given that the daughter sits quietly in the corner reading Little House on the Prairie books.

"I guess she's mousy. That's about the worst I can say," said one member.

The outpouring of truthfulness came five years after the group was created by a church secretary who is now employed elsewhere. At the time, the secretary was responsible for placing all church members into small groups by geographic proximity, age and "sometimes the sounds of their names," she says.

But this group struggled to gel.

"I always looked for reasons to like everyone, but I just couldn't find them," says one woman. "I'm just put off by each person."

Another man says he worked hard "to enjoy their company and find common interests, but I just couldn't do it."

Now, he says, "I'm tired of wasting one night a week on them. I'm even tired of the smell of their houses."

The group agreed to have what they call a "Paul-Barnabas split" in which they part company willingly, with hopes that the others flourish in some other environment, away from the rest.

To the surprise of many, the experience has given them a common bond.

"I like these people a lot more since we all admitted we don't really like each other," says one man. "I still don't want to meet with them every week, but at least we have a real relationship now." •