

THE ETERNAL CG

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Five women sat together, hunkered into a couch and chairs in Dallas, TX, while I hopped on a zoom call to hear their hearts on their unique friendship. You guys... they let me crash their girl's night for this interview — and they were fun. I listened to how they became friends, I heard about an epic lake house weekend they had years ago, about the meeting of some of their husbands. I heard about good decisions, bad decisions, celebrations and "I just need you right now," moments. And I observed the beautiful diversity in personalities. There were jokes and stories — and between the laughs and words there was an *undercurrent of camaraderie*. The commitment to one another was palpable.

They call themselves the "eternal CG"(community group), so obviously when my sister in law told me about this crew she had my full attention. The evidence of friendships's markings has been thrust into the forefront of my attention in the last several months. And so I thought a case study might be an intriguing investigation of theory tested out. They did not disappoint. Full disclosure, I've had the honor of a few

interactions even before this call. These are just my favorite gleanings:

What I noticed:

1. **The value of vulnerability.** Their friendships did not require perfection. They did not require same stage of life. There was no sense of competition or hierarchy. They were actually straightforwardly *confessing* their tricky moments. Not just to be known, not just to get it off their chest — but for accountability. “I knew, in this moment, I was going to have to go home and tell the girls...” — one of them reminisced. And this wasn't dangerous ground, because they were met with love, encouragement, and healthy questions. One said, “They have been agents of change in my life.” They were honest with one another because they loved one another. They had nothing to prove because they were committed. Which should be it's own point.
2. **Commitment.** I asked them about the cost of friendship. There were a few seconds of confused silence. And to be clear — they were investing. There was a cost. But it was as if it never occurred to them to assign it such a word. These people showed up. They did not stop showing up. People moved, assignments changed... they just got out their calendars and started scheduling stuff. They had dinner together at one of their homes before I ever hopped on zoom to join them. They did not withdraw the gift of time when it would have been easier to give up. They were certainly quick to admit these were not their only friends. They did not seem insecure over varied valuable relationships, but they also knew time is limited, and they weren't looking for a popularity win, but determined that their time was well spent diving deep with few.
3. **Shared Values:** Some of these women were married and some were not. Some had babies, one was pregnant, some were in ministry and some were neck deep in careers. There were variations of deep loss, but not the same kind. And this was not the glue. This was not the requirement for the running of life together — it was bigger than that. They were worshipers of the living God. They were running after truth. They were surrendered to the same Lord. And because of this; an ocean span of stories or varied assignments and experiences would likely meet them all head on and would not change the fact that they could link arms in the middle of it.
4. **Genuine “For You” mentality:** They celebrated the real deal stuff of life and were

authentically happy for the wins of another. They kept sharing what they hoped for. There were advancements in families - and they celebrated. There were heavy losses — and they showed up on doorsteps, sat in kitchens, wept over heartbreaks, spoke at funerals, listened to one another's trips or dates, baby showers or birthday parties... they celebrated individuals well.

The Final Question

When I asked them: "Why 'eternal' CG (community group)?" one of them spoke up with distinct clarity:

"There were so many external forces that wouldn't have kept us together. And it is one of the great hopes of our Christian faith that we get to be us forever. We will see each other in glory and we will be grateful for the ways we pushed each other in that direction. I know there will be further complications, we're still in our 30's, but there is no world in which we are not friends to the end. This transcends phases of life, churches, relationships, and we are trying to steward it into eternity."

Years ago, I very quickly noticed how one of my sister in law's great gifts is one of a quiet confidence, a gracious presence, one that invites others around her to rest in her company. It's one of her markings... and I saw how this entire crew had a nature of welcome. They were unassuming, nonjudgemental, gracious women who all happened to have a shared love for the Lord. They were so very different in lots of little ways, but in the biggest way they were unified. They knew Jesus, they loved him, and they were running after him — arm in arm.