

by Kris Tollerson

*Jeff and Beth Coburn***BATTER UP**

Until recently, Jeff and Beth Coburn were spectators, rooting for their home team, Crossroads Fellowship. Members since 1989, they attended Big Church, but remained

foreigners to small groups. Their involvement began a year and a half ago, upon joining Chris Camplejohn's small group. When Chris took on a new role as coach, doors began to open for Jeff. Through Chris' prompting, Jeff took John Frye's small group leadership class through which he received encouragement to step up to the plate. Furthermore, he received inspiration through Chuck's taped messages pertaining to small groups. Although a rookie then, Jeff asserts, "I felt called and equipped to lead small groups."

Through just a small sacrifice, the Coburns launched a small group. "Are you in a small group?" was a simple conversation starter with new people the Coburns met at church. They called folks who had expressed an interest and advertised that child care would be provided. Mixers, such as a game night and barbecue, attracted a few couples within their geographic region. When seven couples arrived at the first official meeting in September, they were elated.

Today, the group consists of six couples with young kids. "Small groups facilitate and embody the goals of the Crossroads Fellowship mission—connect to God, connect to others, connect to the world." They devote four and a half innings to building relationships and the remaining innings to Bible study—topics that enhance marriages or parenting skills. The group's intimacy extends beyond biweekly meetings. Their outing to RTP for the "Walk to Cure Diabetes" in October blessed hosts Darryl and Amy Jones, whose daughter, Anna, has the disease.

Jeff affirms his role as a leader by saying, "I think the contact with other believers is great. You learn new perspectives on God's Word by listening to others. But to me, deep friendships that are built are the true blessings of small groups."

Now on the field, the Coburns are team players with God—doing His work to build His Kingdom. Just like the first church, you can see their small group *"praising God and enjoying the favor of the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* - Acts 2: 47 (NIV)

Jeff and Beth also serve in Adventure City on Sunday mornings. Jeff leads a discipleship study on Wednesday nights. Married 17 years, the Coburns have three children—Josh, 12, Ethan, 6 and Ben, 3.