

# Finding fellowship

From Chit-Chat-Chai to Mumbai

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I decided to attend a college as far away from Mumbai as Northfield with the hope and confidence that God would provide a home away from home, a place where I could let go of all my doubts, fears and worries and become me.

Priyanka Kripalani '06

This began to happen when my roommate Kilang Yanger '06 and I moved in next door to Gary and Deb Hvass. We would sometimes meet with Deb for a prayer session—and not just prayer, but a lot of venting and chatter and listening. At first it started as a way for Kilang and me to find some bearing on life for ourselves, but eventually it occurred to us that we were living in a sea of lost college students. We weren't the only ones (contrary to our initial belief)! We realized that there must have been many students who were dealing with simi-

lar issues but did not have an “Agony Aunt” in their lives! So we started praying for God to guide us in how to reach out to others. Not long after, we felt led to launch Chit-Chat-Chai, a women’s group that met every Friday afternoon over chai tea and snacks. We called it a biblical decision-making group. Deb facilitated, using a group-coaching technique to help us sort through the real-time issues we were facing.

While biblical principles were shared, we had girls from many backgrounds and upbringings: a Buddhist

from Japan, a Zoroastrian from India, a student from China with Catholic roots, a Jewish girl from New York City and a Catholic from St. Louis. Although most of us knew each other, it wasn't until we had this beautiful opportunity to share our lives with each other that we realized how alike we all were! We grew into an intimate group and these weekly chai sessions turned out to be something we waited for all week.

This group met only in the spring term of my senior year, and it was very sad to leave it behind. It was a forma-



Priyanka's chai group met in Mumbai during the time Gary and Deb were visiting in November 2008.

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tive period of my life when I was making many life decisions and needed to hear from God, and this group turned out to be one of my best memories from college.

After I returned to India upon graduation, I missed our Chit-Chat-Chai group and was eager to start something similar. I prayed that God would open the right doors.

In 2009, after attending a three-week apologetics training program through the Ravi Zacharias Ministry, I was asked to start a Women of Substance group under Zacharias's

ministry in Mumbai. The group aims to inspire a passion for loving God among like-minded Christian women and empower them to have an impact in their workplace and in society at large.

Forty ladies from varying backgrounds and professions still come together quarterly, and after a time of hearing from God, we are able to fellowship together. We have had various speakers address us on different topics. I've had several ladies tell me that our time together is something they anticipate with excitement every three

months!

I can see a thread being woven in my life through God's plan and purpose for me, and I praise God for the work He started in my life during my time at Carleton. ♦

Priyanka Kripalani '06 lives in Mumbai, India. She is currently working as the business development manager for a seafood export firm, Pijikay Group of Companies. She is also working on an Executive Master's degree in Business Law at the National Law School of India in Bangalore, India.

