



Community Groups

What they are & how to join

What is a community group?

Community groups are small, local gatherings of believers who gather to study God's Word, pray, encourage one another and form relationships of care and accountability. Community groups are where we can move from being acquaintances to friends and confidantes. Through these intimate relationships, believers help nurture and encourage one another to live out the gospel in their relationships, workplace, school and within the church community.

Why should I join a community group?

When we turn to Scripture, one of the first things we see believers do after confessing Christ is they gather together: "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). God knows the best way we can grow our relationship with Jesus isn't by doing it alone but by joining with other believers, who can encourage us in our walk of faith. Yet, for many of us, our experience in church is as just another face in the crowd. While we may attend week after week, we never feel like we develop deep, meaningful relationships with others. If that has been your experience, or even if you desire to grow deeper in your relationships with other believers, you will find what you are seeking in community groups. Community groups are places where we can enter deep, meaningful relationship with other believers, study the

Scriptures, pray and encourage one another. By gathering in the intimacy of smaller groups, you will find community groups to be a place where you can bring your questions, thoughts, and learn from and with others. Even more, you will find a place where you can share the challenges and joys of life with others, as you seek to follow Christ.

When, where and how often do community groups meet?

Community groups meet in homes or at the church, bi-weekly throughout the year. Group meetings typically last about 2 hours. The ministry year begins in September and concludes for summer holidays in June. Community groups meet on different days of the week and at different times depending on the availability and needs of each group and its members. Your group leader will discuss a convenient place, day and time that works for you and the rest of the group members.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer "

- Acts 2:42

What kind of commitment is expected if I join a community group?

When an individual joins a community group it is important that they are aware that they are making a commitment not only to active attendance, but also to uphold the values for community group members. Since we are striving to create a group culture of trust, intimacy and openness, we expect members to seek to contribute to a healthy group culture. When joining a community group, members will be asked to sign the Community Group Covenant. This covenant outlines the values we seek to uphold. Below is a list of the values you will be committing to:

- **Priority.** Because we believe in the value of community, we agree to give priority to our group meetings. If we are running late or are unable to attend, we will communicate with the group leader.
- **Confidentiality.** We agree that whatever is shared here stays here. This includes what is shared through phone calls, e-mails, etc. We want this group to be a safe place to grow.
- **Participation.** We agree to encourage, support, and stand behind one another, choosing to see ourselves linked together.
- **Accessibility.** We agree to help one another and be available to one another outside of group meetings whenever possible.

- **Openness.** We will seek to be open and honest with each other. Our community group is a place where we can take off our masks, be ourselves, and be accepted for who we are.
- **Respect.** We agree to treat one another with respect at all times, especially in times of disagreement or conflict. We will strive to be available to one another and listen, encourage, support, and tell the truth in loving ways.
- **Open Chair.** We agree to keep an empty chair for others and seek to reach out to people like us who need this place of caring and growth. We plan to raise and train a future leader from our group who will establish a new community group.



What is the size of a community group?

Community groups consist of around 10-12 members and consist of no fewer than 5 members. Keeping groups between 5-12 members allows groups to maintain a sense of intimacy. When groups grow too large, one of the tendencies is for group members to begin to feel uncomfortable sharing their needs with a large group or contributing to discussion. When in a smaller group setting however, many people (even naturally shy people) will feel free to discuss issues in their life or sense that they should contribute to the discussion.

What kind of study material do community groups use?

Throughout the year, each community group will utilize study material that will take them through a biblical book. Depending on the size of the biblical book (e.g. an Epistle, Gospel, Prophetic book), they may study more than one book in a ministry year. To help each group member engage in the biblical text, each group member will receive a study guide which provides discussion questions to guide their discussion and personal study. While, group members are not required to use a study guide, we believe using these guides will help you engage in deeper discussion. Each study guide typically costs between \$10-15. We encourage members to cover the costs of these books.

How do I join a community group?

If you are interested in joining a community group you can contact the Pastor Jason Dahmer, who is the Community Group Ministry Leader. After contacting you, he will seek to connect you with a community group in your area and which best suits your availability and needs.



Jason Dahmer

Associate Pastor

Contact Information

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