**Overview**

At Our Church we believe that being a part of a Small Group is an important element for growth and fulfillment as a Christian. A Small Group is a small community of people within the larger body of the church who do life together.  Our goal is growth in Christ and development of relationships with other people.

**What is the Purpose of Small Groups?**
We believe we experience life best in the context of community. In a Small Group, people study God's Word together, discuss, get their questions answered , pray together, care for one another, and are missed if they don't show up. Small Groups are a wonderful place to build solid friendships and connect with other people. The small group concept is not a new trend. In fact, it is a model of ministry that you see all throughout the Word of God! Here are just a few of those examples:

1. God created mankind but he set us in families. Families were the very first examples of life groups. Why? Because in a small group, you can intimately know others, give and receive and truly build lasting relationships.
2. Jesus was the ultimate Small Group Leader! He launched his ministry with a small group of 12 men (e.g., his disciples).
3. Moses had many under shepherds that helped him to the lead the people in more manageable groups.
4. The disciples followed in the footsteps of Jesus by implementing small groups as a way for people to provide care to one another and learn about God in a small, intimate setting.

Jesus showed us the model for living by how he lived his life on earth. He was faithful in going to the temple to experience God. Yet, Jesus showed us there was much more to a life that pursues God than just going to the temple. In fact, the temple is not where Jesus spent the majority of his time. Jesus spent the majority of his time in small groups with the people! Whether he was in a house sharing with a group of eager listeners, teaching from a boat to those gathered on the shore, on a mountainside sharing a parable, or walking along a dusty road with his disciples, Jesus spent his life in groups.

WWJD? He would do what he did when he was on the earth. He would experience life with others.

When asked what was the best way for a newcomer to build friendships and stay connected, the number one answer was…SMALL GROUPS.

When asked what was the best way for a person to be effectively discipled, the number one answer was once again…SMALL GROUPS!

**Small Groups really are the ACTS 2 church in action**:

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”   Acts 2:42-47*

Based upon scripture, Small Groups provide opportunities for:

        1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .
        “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching…”

        2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
        “...and to the fellowship … they ate together with glad and sincere hearts…”

        3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
        “...and to the breaking of bread ...”

        4. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
        “…and to prayer…”

        5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
        “…they gave to anyone as he had need …”

        6. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
         “…praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”

        7. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
        “And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Jesus is very concerned about our love for one another. One way we accomplish this is through involvement in a Life Group.

*“May the Lord make your love to grow and overflow to each other... so that you may stand before him guiltless on that day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns with all those who belong to him.”  1 Th. 3:12-13 LB

“I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you. Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”   John 13: 34-35 LB*

**Grow in the Word and Relationships:**

The way we experience community at Our Church is by participating in a Small Group.

We believe that our church must become \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at the same time.

*“You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house.” Acts 20:20*

 **Small Groups Provide Three Things:**

 **A place to** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 *“…yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.” 1 Corinthians 9:22 LB*

 **A place to** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

 *“We know what real love is because Christ gave up His life for us. And so we also ought to give up our lives for our Christian brothers and sisters.”*

 *1 John 3:16 NLT*

 **A place to \_**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**\_\_\_\_.**

 *“As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.” Proverbs 27:17*

**How Do Life Groups Work At Our Church?**

Our groups are as varied as we are; group leaders use their gifts and passions to create a group that allows others to join with them in experiencing Christian community. We do this by learning the Word of God together, building relationships, praying and often times sharing a meal. We believe when a small group of people come together (e.g., 6-15 people), we are able to truly experience life together.

We have Small Groups that meet all different days of the week in various locations across our city. Whatever the stage you are in your life (married, retired, couples with children, etc.) or interest you have (e.g., riding motorcycles, being with other women, Homeschoolers, etc.), we have many groups to choose from. Our groups meet:

* Either weekly or twice per month.
* On or off-campus. Many groups are held in homes but we also offer groups at the church. The majority of our on-campus groups meet on Wednesday evenings at.
* For approximately 2 hours each time the group gathers.

New groups start and stop two times per year in the fall and winter/spring semesters. Additionally, our on-campus Wednesday evening groups also meet in the summer. Each semester is kicked off with an exciting and informative event called “Small Groups Launch” where you can learn about and sign up for a group that interests you.

You will also learn about Small Groups that are happening now and sign up for a group in your Connect Track class today!

What’s Your Next Step?

Finding Purpose – Your next step in the Connect Track is Finding Purpose. In the Finding Purpose class, we will assist you in discovering your God-given gifts, passions and interests. We believe God gave you a divine design, uniquely yours, and we want to help you find your purpose in the family of God.

Answer Key:

Pg 2: Bible Study, Fellowship, Communion, Prayer, Support, Praise, Outreach

Pg 3: Larger, smaller, connect, protect, grow