

Summer Rhythms in Frontline Community Groups

To better care for our leaders, disciple our people, and live on mission as a church, we want to change how we approach the annual summer break. The hope is that these new summer rhythms deepen rest for our leaders without sacrificing the care, discipleship, and mission our groups provide.

To better care for our community group leaders and better live in sync with the season of the year, we will lengthen the summer rhythm from one month to two (June and July), pausing family meals during that time. During the months of June and July, community group leaders are encouraged to step back from leading, facilitating, and organizing. This will allow others to: (1) host missional gatherings, and (2) keep meeting in discipleship groups.

For the sake of mission, we ask community group leaders to work with their hub leaders to identify one or two families to host two missional gatherings—one in June and one in July. Give your people the freedom to get creative with these events. The summer is a great time to invite our lost friends and neighbors to casual, low-pressure events. This could be anything from an evening hanging around the pool, a sporting event watch party, a movie night for the kids, or a “bring-your-own-meat-to-grill” barbecue in your backyard. Learn more about the three kinds of missional gatherings on the next page, or read or listen to the section of the *Community Group Handbook* entitled “Missional Gatherings” (frontlinechurch.com/handbook).

For the sake of discipleship, we encourage discipleship groups to continue their regular rhythms in June and July. Sin and suffering don’t take breaks in the summer months. We all need the steady encouragement of our brothers and sisters as we follow Jesus. If you haven’t yet had a chance to launch discipleship groups, it would be wise to get them off the ground before heading into the summer months. Apprentices are ideal candidates to recruit as discipleship group facilitators (see frontlinechurch.com/apprenticeship and frontlinechurch.com/facilitators). If you’re curious about this option, read or listen to the section on discipleship groups in the *Community Group Handbook*, then reach out to your hub leader with any questions (frontlinechurch.handbook).

By May 31, community group leaders should aim to...

- ☒ Identify who will lead the June and July Missional Gatherings (apprentices are ideal candidates)
- ☒ Identify a point person to facilitate each discipleship group during the summer months (if not already established)
- ☒ Rest (remember, delegation is a part of discipleship)



Missional Gatherings

*Gathering intentionally for the sake of people far from God
to proclaim the gospel and demonstrate the kingdom*

In addition to our own growth and development, community groups exist so that others might come to know and follow Jesus. Missional gatherings help us push back darkness through both gospel proclamation and kingdom demonstration. Missional gatherings give us the opportunity to build relationships with those who don't follow Jesus and tell them about the one who has rescued us. They also give us the opportunity to care for the spiritual and physical needs of those in darkness around us. *We gather missionally in three primary ways...*

1. We gather missionally to host.

We gather with the expressed intention of showing gospel hospitality to those outside of Christian community. Hospitality builds trust and encourages conversations to go deeper. Acquaintances might even become friends. Hosting could be as simple as throwing a block party, engaging some cultural event such as Halloween or the Super Bowl, or encouraging group members to invite lost friends or neighbors to a backyard barbecue. Whatever it looks like, we hope that through hosting, our presence would begin to be felt in our neighborhood.

2. We gather missionally to help.

We prioritize serving with our city partners, which are organizations thoughtfully chosen by each congregation on the basis of their impact. As we serve the poor, marginalized, and needy in our communities, we build relationships with our community. Since many non-Christians also have a desire to do good for their city, we can invite them to serve alongside us as a means of strengthening our friendship. There are needs all around us, even right next door. As we thoughtfully engage where we live, we will notice people and places where we can

bring the light of Jesus to the world. We provide Push Back Darkness Grants to our community groups to empower them to meet specific needs in their own community.

3. We gather missionally to hang out.

We gather regularly with those who don't follow Jesus in natural, neutral places outside of the church and our homes. This helps us form new friendships and introduce people to Christian community, while we gather with people where they already are. This could be at a coffee shop, a park, a concert, or some other event. It could be centered around a hobby or another recreational activity. Regardless, the point is to look for less-intimidating places where we can build relationships with non-Christians. We should invite our unbelieving friends, family, and neighbors to gather with us as we have fun together and get to know one another. The hope is that through these missional gatherings, natural conversations will come up about Jesus and the hope we have in him. For a more detailed look at missional gatherings, as well as answers to common questions, see the section entitled "Missional Gatherings" in the *Community Group Handbook*.

