

**REACHING  
PEOPLE  
FOR CHRIST**



**COMMUNITY GROUP  
*LEADERSHIP TRAINING***

# THE FIVE PURPOSES OF A COMMUNITY GROUP

1. Reaching people for Christ
2. Teaching people the Bible
3. Ministering to one another in the Community Group
4. Serving the Lord as a Community Group
5. Integrating the mission and vision of Henderson Hills Baptist Church to the Community Group

“*Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.*” Matt. 28:19

**Reaching People for Christ** is the highest purpose of Christian community and discipleship. Community Group members cannot teach people the Bible or minister to one another if others have not been reached. There are no strong healthy relationships to build if people are not reached. If people are not reached, there is no Community Group.

Once people have been reached for Christ, Community Groups provide an opportunity for believers to come together in a more relational setting to share the gospel, invest in each other's lives, and grow in their faith. While Community Groups can vary in size, it is important for groups of all sizes to continue to grow in number.

## **FOUR SIGNIFICANT ISSUES WE WILL EXAMINE IN THIS BOOKLET:**

- Biblical support for reaching people for Christ.
- Identifying an intentional leader who leads the group in outreach and social gatherings.
- Viewing Community Group Ministry through the lens of disciple-making, not convenience.
- Best practices for reaching people for Christ through the Community Group Ministry.

Community Groups are better equipped to reach people than any other organization in the church. They are Henderson Hills' biggest ministry organization, they meet during prime-times on Sundays, and there's childcare. Plus, they are organized to quickly assimilate new people and build relationships.

## ***BIBLICAL SUPPORT FOR REACHING PEOPLE FOR CHRIST***

Matthew 28:19-20 is called the Great Commission because Jesus commands His disciples, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This commandment is not just for the original disciples, but for all believers. It is our responsibility as Christians to share the good news of the gospel with others and to make disciples. Community Groups are Henderson Hills' best strategy for reaching people for Christ.

Community Groups should play a significant role in fulfilling the Great Commission and growing the church. By intentionally inviting new members, Community Groups have the opportunity to teach them about Jesus and to help them grow in their faith. As the group grows, it can also provide more support and encouragement for members as they navigate the highs and lows of life. Ultimately, a Community Group should create and experience a multiplying effect, as new believers grow in their faith, develop leadership strength, and go on to share the gospel with others, and make more disciples.

In Acts 1:8, Jesus tells His disciples that they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them and that they will be His witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This verse is a reminder that our responsibility as believers extends beyond our immediate circle.

Community Groups can play a vital role in fulfilling this call to witness. By bringing in new members from diverse backgrounds, we have the opportunity to share the gospel with people who may have never heard it before. This can be especially true for small groups that are intentional about outreach and evangelism. As we welcome new members, we expand our reach and fulfill our call to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Another reason why Community Groups should grow in number is for the sake of the community. God created us to live in relationship with one another and Community Groups provide a space for us to do just that. By bringing in new members, we are expanding our community and creating more opportunities for fellowship, support, and love.

One of the benefits of a larger Community Group is that there are more opportunities for members to use their spiritual gifts. Romans 12:4-8 teaches us that we are all members of one body and that each of us has different gifts we are meant to use for the benefit of the whole. A Community Group means there are

more people with different gifts and talents that can be used to serve and bless the group.

For example, a larger group may have someone who is gifted in teaching, allowing for more in-depth Bible studies. Another member may have the gift of hospitality, making it possible for the group to host events or dinners.

## ***IDENTIFY AN INTENTIONAL LEADER WHO LEADS THE GROUP IN OUTREACH & SOCIAL GATHERINGS***

Reaching people for Christ will not effectively develop without the intentional effort and emphasis by Community Group leaders. Like anything else in life, little is accomplished if leaders don't get intentional about it. When it comes to reaching people for Christ, there are three areas that must receive attention by the Community Group leaders.

- **Enlist an Outreach/Social Leader** - If a job is to be done, then someone has to "own" the task. Nothing becomes active until it is led by a leader with a specific plan to implement. As long as the outreach objective remains the job of everybody, then no one will see to the specific action of the task. This role is important because reaching people for Christ also takes place outside the Sunday experience.
- **Time** - Set aside time for outreach. There must be designated times regularly scheduled for outreach activities such as prayer for new people during class time, relationship building

opportunities at Community Group activities, and so on. Unless timelines are established, the likelihood of accomplishing what you've set out to do decreases.

- **Budget/Intentional Invitation** - There must be money budgeted through the Community Group. Budgets reflect the priorities of the group. Every social event should be identified as a relationship building outreach opportunity. Recent guests to the Community Group should be invited. Friends and neighbors within the circle of influence of Community Group members should be invited as well.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION FOR OUTREACH/SOCIAL LEADER**

The purpose of the Outreach/Social Leader is to assist the Community Group Leadership and members through successful follow-up with group guests. They also model and give leadership to having a “living sent” mindset within the group.

## **WHAT DOES THE OUTREACH/SOCIAL LEADER DO?**

- Promotes the “living sent” value in the group - fostering intentional relationships with new people.
- Plans and encourages relationship building events.
- Coordinates the follow-up of group guests.
- Follow-ups of assigned prospects.
  - Prospects will be provided by the Discipleship & Community staff and will be intentionally assigned to the group.
- Builds team of Community Group members who will commit to building relationships with guests.

- Sets an example by being personally involved in sharing Christ with others and enlisting prospects for group and church membership.

## **COMMUNITY GROUP PROSPECT CONTACT PROCESS**

- Works with Administration & Records Leader to collect contact information.
- Records pertinent notes, name, phone number, and email on a spreadsheet or other organization system.
- Disseminates the contact information to the Community Group Leadership Team.
- Administrates the invitation (call, text, GroupMe, invitation, etc.) of guests to attend group events, service opportunities, and social gatherings.

## **REPEAT GUESTS**

- Invites guests to join the Community Group.
- Celebrates new Community Group membership within the group.
- Informs the Discipleship & Community office of the change of status from Community Group guest to member.

## **PLAN COMMUNITY GROUP SOCIAL GATHERINGS**

- Provides opportunities for group members and guests to build relationships with one another.

- Helps assimilate new members and guests into the group through activities.
- Creates entry points to reach prospects and unsaved or unchurched friends.
- Assists in reclaiming inactive members through activities.
- Enlists a team to execute the activities.
- Communicates with Community Group leaders to set the dates, times, places, and activities.
- Invites all members, inactive members, and prospects to activities.
- Shows sensitivity to costs involved in activities.
- Arranges for childcare, if appropriate.
- Encourages members to pray for, invite, and bring unsaved/ unchurched friends to the Community Group.

## **HOW OFTEN SHOULD ACTIVITIES BE PLANNED?**

- Ideally each group will have 3-5 events each year.
- Smaller groups may desire monthly socials.
- Activities should normally be in homes or public places rather than the church building.



# **EXAMINING THE COMMUNITY GROUP MINISTRY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF DISCIPLE-MAKING, NOT CONVENIENCE**

	<b>Disciple-Making</b>	<b>Convenience</b>
Leadership	Reproducing, apprentice training, giving others opportunities to lead, planning to multiply a new group.	Ownership, my class, my lesson, my room, my people, independent, narrow-minded vision.
Community Group Time	When are we able to meet that provides time for growing most quickly?	When are we able to meet that is most convenient for our class?
Community Group Location	Where are we able to meet that provides space for growing most quickly?	Where are we able to meet that is most convenient for our class?

Community Groups are not just a program; they are a calling to ministry. Community Groups are not just a weekly event; they are a strategy to accomplish the Great Commission. The primary questions are, “How do Community Groups tangibly and practically accomplish the Great Commission? How do we, as Community Groups, ‘Go and make disciples of all nations...?’”

The following strategy has been proven over the decades by churches committed to reaching people for Christ. If we look at Community Groups through the lens of disciple-making, we understand that we must continually be developing new leaders and multiplying new Community Groups.

**1. Develop New Leaders** - If the key to reaching new people for Christ is to multiply new Community Groups, then we must always be in the process of developing new leaders. For a new Community Group to survive and thrive it must be led by a true leader. Leadership provides the foundational support for any new Community Group. Everything rises and falls based upon leadership. Every Community Group leader should have an apprentice to train and to eventually share their responsibility. Leaders duplicating themselves is the discipleship model.

**2. Multiply New Community Groups** - If you ask the Community Group members in our church why Community Groups matter, you'll get a wide variety of responses. Community and relationships? Yes! Support and encouragement? Yes! Study the Bible more deeply? Yes! We need to multiply? No! Unfortunately, multiplying a Community Group may not be on people's minds, but it should be. Multiplication is at the heart of discipleship, and discipleship is the ultimate purpose of our church. In a nutshell, the mission of the church is to make disciples who make disciples. This is God's own design for how the gospel spreads.

## **WHEN A GROUP EXPERIENCES 80% OF ITS MAXIMUM ATTENDANCE CAPACITY, IT MAY BEGIN TO PLATEAU FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS:**

- **Room/House Too Small** - If a group reaches 80% of its maximum capacity, it may face limitations in terms of available space and resources. This could include the size of the classrooms, seating arrangements, and overall infrastructure. When the available resources are stretched to their limits, it becomes challenging to accommodate additional attendees, resulting in a plateau.
- **Leader-to-Member Ratio** - Maintaining an effective leader-to-member ratio is crucial for quality ministry and

personalized attention. When a Community Group nears its maximum attendance capacity, the number of members per leader may increase beyond an optimal level. This can impact the overall quality of learning, ministry, and community interaction, making it harder to accommodate additional members without compromising the five purposes of a Community Group.

- **Volunteer Leader Availability** - Community Groups rely on dedicated volunteer leaders to run smoothly. As attendance approaches the maximum capacity, the demand for volunteers to manage the five purposes of a Community Group also increases. Finding and recruiting a sufficient number of qualified volunteers can become more challenging, leading to a plateau as the available leadership pool reaches its limit.
- **Community Group Outreach Awareness** - When a group consistently operates at 80% capacity, it suggests that it has established a level of fruitfulness and success. However, reaching beyond that point may require additional efforts to raise awareness and attract more members. If the promotion and outreach strategies do not keep pace with the growth, it can result in a plateau.
- **Retention and Attrition** - Sometimes, plateauing attendance may be due to a balance between new members and those who leave. While new individuals may join the Community Group, existing members may gradually discontinue their participation for various reasons such as relocation, changes in personal circumstances, or shifting priorities. This equilibrium between new additions and departures can contribute to a consistent but stagnant attendance rate.

To overcome the plateau, a Community Group may need to address these factors by considering strategies such as recruiting and training more volunteer leaders/apprentices, emphasizing

outreach efforts, and providing an engaging and inclusive Community Group environment. Once a Community Group experiences 80% of maximum attendance capacity, it needs to multiply. Otherwise the Community Group could bump into an obstructive growth ceiling.

If the goal of our church is “to glorify God by becoming a hub for an all-ages, disciple-making movement,” then it begins with first being a disciple. We define a disciple as, “one who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and committed to the mission of Jesus.”

## **THE CLEAREST GAUGE OF WHETHER YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP IS LIVING OUT THE GREAT COMMISSION IS IF IT IS MULTIPLYING.**

When a Community Group decides to take steps to start a new Community Group, the process is called multiplying. But remember: Community Group multiplication doesn't happen easily. There has always been tension between building real relational bonds and sending members to start new Community Groups. It's challenging to get people to multiply. In Community Groups, intimate bonds are formed and people often feel protective of their community. Therefore, we clearly communicate the goal of multiplication to the leadership from the beginning. The Community Group leadership also communicates this goal to ensure support and active participation from group members. Multiplication must become the very fabric of our Community Group Ministry. When a new leader is added, a disciple is multiplied, it is a win for the Kingdom of God. If multiplication is a known focus of our Community Groups, then new leaders emerge, new Community Groups are multiplied, and growth happens.

# ***HOW DO WE MULTIPLY A COMMUNITY GROUP?***

Multiplying a new Community Group should be approached with great sensitivity and careful discernment to ensure its future fruitfulness and positive impact on the church. First and foremost, prayer should be the foundation of this decision-making process, seeking divine guidance and wisdom in discerning whether it is the right time to multiply. Involving Community Group leaders and members in the prayer process can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the Community Group's readiness for expansion.

Wisdom should be exercised in selecting the appropriate leadership and initial participants for the new Community Group. Community Group participants should prayerfully volunteer to multiply rather than being assigned to multiply. Initial Community Group participants could volunteer to commit to six months and then return to the original Community Group if necessary. Strategic planning is crucial, taking into account factors such as class size, demographics, and need to create a nurturing environment for relationship building and spiritual growth.

Continuously monitoring the health and growth of both the original and multiplying Community Group is essential, allowing for adjustments and improvements as needed to foster a thriving spiritual community. Ultimately, with prayerful consideration, wise planning, and attentive care, multiplying a new Community Group can contribute significantly to spiritual and numerical growth and future vitality of the church.

## **STEP 1 - GATHER A LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Begin every new group with a Teacher and a Director.
- Read through the Five Purposes of a Community Group.
- Pray through the leadership expectations and ask God to provide you with a core group.
- Schedule a time to meet with the Pastor of Discipleship & Community.

## **STEP 2 - GATHER A CORE GROUP**

- Start with a list of potential group prospects.
- Ask the Pastor of Discipleship & Community to provide a list of current church guests.
- Begin the contact process and reach out to prospects, inviting them to join the new core group.
- Seek 4-6 individuals to commit to the core group meeting and new group launch.

## **STEP 3 - START MEETING WITH A CORE GROUP**

- Host a core group meeting on or off campus.
- Core group meetings serve as a time for prayer, outreach, and community-building.
- Core group meetings should continue for 3-4 weeks to ensure viability of the potential group.
- Begin identifying potential leaders as you meet, but do not rush to fill these positions.

- Chose a launch date, time, and discuss location availability with the Pastor of Discipleship & Community.
- Discuss available on-campus space with your core group and consider moving off-campus.

## **STEP 5 - CONTINUING GROUP LEADERSHIP**

- Meet regularly with the Pastor of Discipleship & Community as your group grows.
- Follow up with guests and members on a weekly basis.
- Pray for God's continued blessing and growth for your group.

# ***BEST PRACTICES FOR REACHING PEOPLE FOR CHRIST THROUGH COMMUNITY GROUP MINISTRY***

Ask yourself this important question: Does my Community Group consistently reach new people for Christ? If not, why?

Community Groups are not a closed group. They should be growing and multiplying. Our purpose is to share Jesus with Edmond and the surrounding communities, not just to have a holy, safe, huddle! Make a plan to intentionally reach new people for Christ.

## TRY SOME OF THESE SIMPLE TIPS TO KEEP YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP MOVING AND GROWING:

- **Atmosphere** - Cultivate a high-energy, welcoming atmosphere before class. Assign early greeters. Consider playing music. Encourage members and guests to arrive early to build relationships. God's house should look as nice as yours. Get permission, then freshen up, viciously de-clutter, update décor, and help make needed repairs. Joyfully repeat the process annually or if your room assignment changes.
- **Warm Greeting** - Teach members to truly greet. When guests arrive, all members must immediately, intentionally turn their focus toward meeting, befriending, and including new guests. Ask regular members to consider the guest's point of view.
- **Keep Good Records** - Prepare a members guest list with email or phone numbers. Ask guests' permission to add their names; then update it before the following week. Track guests regularly and encourage them to join the Community Group.
- **Name Tags/Bibles** - Enhance relationships with name tags that are readable from six feet away. Provide Bibles and other resources for guests to use, too.
- **Celebrate Wins!** - We replicate what we celebrate! Celebration is an incentive to get people to embrace a Kingdom culture. Our celebrations can be elaborate or simple. Fundamentally, we want to acknowledge and celebrate what we want replicated.
- **Celebrate With Photos** - Create a group where Community Group members can post pictures of events, and action photos of your group in fellowship, ministry, study, laughter, worship, and prayer. Add current photos at least monthly.



- **Celebrate Together** - Create an atmosphere of celebration, love, and enhanced relationships. This can be achieved by planning social events and frequent gatherings. Focus on including newcomers. Meet often for Sunday lunch. Participate in all-church activities such as corporate worship on Sundays, church family nights, camps, etc.
- **Creativity** - Regularly make small changes to subtly heighten interest and avoid stagnation. Face chairs in a different direction. Rearrange them in semi-circles or rows.
- **Empty Chairs** - If all chairs are occupied when a guest arrives, they'll feel awkward, unexpected, and unwelcomed. Community Group should anticipate guests and add chairs.
- **God's Word** - A great Bible study class must have a quality, life-changing, Bible study. Is more time spent discussing ailments and political opinions than God's Word? We must commit our time as a Community Group to the Lord and His Word. One practical way of helping foster this attitude shift is printing announcements and prayer requests so the group can review them together.
- **Time** - Consistently begin precisely on time. If Community Group time precedes a worship service, it's imperative to always dismiss with ample time to arrive before worship begins. If you are meeting in a room with groups before or after, leaving ample time helps the transition from group to group. Leaders demonstrate this priority by eagerly leading the way.
- **Look for Guests** - Every leader and member should eagerly watch for guests in the worship service and personally invite them to their Community Group.

- **Timely Follow-Up** - The goal for Community Group leaders should be to reach out to guests within 48 hours. Reaching out to guests can vary between personal visits, lunch/dinner, phone calls, texts, emails, handwritten welcome notes, etc. Delegating these weekly follow-up assignments amongst established group members is a great way to give guests the community feeling. For example, one of our growing Community Groups invites newcomers to coffee or lunch with their members so they can get to know them, share their own story, and invite them to join their group.
- **Multiply or Stagnate** - Make a class goal to multiply at least annually. This means your class will intentionally reach new people and birth a new, reproducing class. Train an apprentice teacher, set numeric goals, and schedule the multiplication date.

Community Groups minister to one another during emergencies and crisis by shepherding or caring for one another.

Elders care for the deacons at Henderson Hills and hear from them how they can come alongside both deacons and Community Group leaders to minister to one another. Elders share with each other and pray for the needs of the church.

When necessary, Community Group leaders can lean on the deacons in their Community Group to help with caring, shepherding, and ministering to people in need. Community Groups who do not have an active deacon in the group have assigned to them a staff member to help fill the void of a deacon.

In a large and growing church like Henderson Hills, the elders, deacons, ministerial staff, and Community Group leaders partner together in the shepherding of God's flock - the church.

Below are HHBC staff who partner with elders, deacons, and Community Group leaders:



**Wally Weaver** (wweaver@hhbc.com, 405-341-4639) - will attend to the needs of our Senior Adult Community Groups without an active Deacon.



**Beth McClain** (bmclain@hhbc.com, 405-341-4639) - will attend to the needs of our Women's Community Groups without an active Deacon.



**Phil Sallee** (psallee@hhbc.com, 405-341-39) - will attend to all other Community Groups without an active Deacon.



**HENDERSON HILLS**  
BAPTIST CHURCH