

Opening: Open Each Community Group Meeting by Reading the Community Grp Summary

What is a Community Group at Trinity Presbyterian Church?

Community Groups are basic Christian communities. Believing that getting to know Jesus and falling in love with him are activities best carried out in a community context, Community Groups provide that context. They are gatherings of 6 to 12 people meeting in homes and apartments throughout the city during the week. In Community Groups, people come to know God and to experience His presence, community is developed and fostered, and people are nurtured, equipped and released for God's work in the world. They provide an opportunity for intimacy, mutual support, practical love and service, learning about the Christian faith, prayer, and sharing of what we see God doing in our midst.

What is the Purpose of Community Groups?

A place to meet and experience Jesus Christ in our midst through mutual ministry

A place for fellowship and friendship

A place where gifts are exercised

A place to discover Christianity

What happens during a Community Group Meeting?

Worship – Experiencing the Worth of God and freely giving ourselves to Him

Sharing – Learning to tell the story of our journey with God

Sermon Application – Reflecting together on what God has given us from His Word during Corporate Worship

Prayer – Talking with God

Mission – Having experienced God's love, we now go to love our neighbor with the love we have from God

How do they fit in at Trinity as a whole?

Community Groups are the *primary place for pastoral care at Trinity*. Churches do one of two things: They either practice systematic care and encouragement of the congregation or systematic neglect of the congregation. Our network of community groups is the means through which we seek to practice the former. While some congregations may have small groups, our congregation is small groups. Our network of Community groups serves as the nervous system of our church. In them, the gospel is used to motivate people towards a richer relationship with God. In them, the gospel is used as a balm to apply to the wounds we incur in this broken world. In them, the gospel is used to call and motivate people into the service of God's kingdom: In response to God's grace, people are urged to develop lives of moral beauty, integrity and other-centeredness and to discover and use their gifts to carry out ministry both within the congregation and to the world.

The Context of Change: The Worshiping Community

Worshiping God enables us to see the beauty of God and the beauty of godliness. When we worship, we find that our love for God deepens and the hold that other things have on us loosen. When we worship, we find that it changes what we want: we want God and we want to please him more than we want and desire other things. Regularly worshipping God with the larger church, in small groups and on a daily basis as an individual is indispensable if our lives are to change.

Growth by Multiplying New Groups

Trinity's primary vision is that by multiplying groups we are able to increase our capability as a church to care for people. When people are not involved in significant Christian relationships, like Community Groups, it greatly inhibits Christian maturity. Currently many of our friends at Trinity fall outside this kind of caring and encouraging community. For this reason, we consider it imperative to develop new leaders and expand the number of groups. We are not concerned with multiplying groups as an end in itself. We want to increase the number of groups because we want to provide quality personal care and community life for those who are part of our network of friends. As long as we have too few groups, Trinity, Lakeland and Polk County will fail to be as effective as we might be. If we are going to be successful at multiplying groups, then we will need to cast a vision that will make people enthusiastic and committed to these things. If this vision casting is neglected, the resistance to multiplying groups will prove too strong to overcome.

Warm Up (OPTIONAL) - Read Sermon Passage and Corporate Worship Themes

We read the sermon passage, storyline and themes to warm our hearts and minds to remember what God has spoken to us in our time together Sunday morning.

Proclamation of God's Word**The Storyline – The Greatest Life of Faith is the life of Greatest Suffering**

I love being a Christian. I love the loving, the learning, the conviction of sin, the beauty, the wonder, the faith, the joy, the sadness, the confusion, the mess, the not yet, the community, and in recent years the pain. "It is the point of greatest peril that germinates a heart most sterile to the love that God has waiting to unfold."

So what does the life of greatest faith include? Nothing less than the life of greatest suffering. Wow! And all this time I have been trying to avoid suffering and in doing so I have avoided - JESUS. UGH! What an idiot I have been. I should have spent every minute straining to figure out how to help every person be great no matter the cost to me. Letting others have. Making a way for others. Promoting. Listening. Waiting. The scars I have missed. The loneliness I have peopled. The silence I have filled. The road I have followed.

Thank you. Thank you Jesus for being ugly and outcast, for being pierced and blamed, for living lonely and hungry, for giving all to have your Dad's fellowship, for being me so that I could have You, for your scars that are consequences of your love of your Dad's assignment that mean eternal blessings for me. I love being me cuz of you. This song by Ben Rector sums up best what my testimony. Blessings

More like Love - Ben Rector -

<https://open.spotify.com/track/5GSGN3hi9gLggMrZJLqfTy?si=dae50586bfa94ab4>

I used to think I wanted to be famous
I'd be recognized out in a crowd
But the funny thing is every time
I've gotten what I want it lets me down

But now I just wanna look more like love
I just wanna look more like love
This whole world is spinning crazy
And I can't quite keep up
So one thing around here that we don't have
quite enough of
So I just wanna look a little more like love

I used to think I needed all the answers
I used to need to know that I was right
I used to be afraid of things I couldn't cover up
in black and white

But now I just wanna look more like love
I just wanna look more like love
This whole world is spinning crazy

I can't quite keep up
So one thing around here that we don't have
quite enough of
So I just wanna look a little more like love

I find the farther that I climb
There's always another line of mountain tops
It's never gonna stop
And the more of anything I do
The thing that always ends up true
Is getting what I want, will never be enough

So I just wanna look more like love
I just wanna look more like love
This whole world is spinning crazy
I can't quite keep up
So one thing around here that we don't have
quite enough of
So I just wanna look a little more like love

Themes

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| • Suffering | • Filth | • Unworthy |
| • Love | • Perspective | • Atonement |
| • Problem | • Alternate Universe | • Beauty |
| • Worst | • Fear | • Hug |
| • Alienation | • Shame | • Father |

1. Launchers:

- What is your greatest fear/nightmare?
- Rank Tim's list from his sermon least to greatest fears – 1 to 8
 - *pain,*
 - *ugliness,*
 - *rejection,*
 - *sorrow,*
 - *worthlessness,*
 - *guilt*
 - *shame*
 - *death*

2. Worship for the work of Jesus to make us righteous

He who is most beautiful became hideous to make many to be accounted righteous!

Worship God for the wonder of salvation that the worst is over and the best is yet to come.

Isaiah 53 (ESV)

53 Who has believed what he has heard from us?
And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?

² For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look
at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.

³ He was despised and rejected by men,
a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;
and as one from whom men hide their faces
he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us
peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own
way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,
yet he opened not his mouth;
like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
and like a sheep that before its shearers is
silent,

so he opened not his mouth.

⁸ By oppression and judgment he was taken
away;

and as for his generation, who considered
that he was cut off out of the land of the living,
stricken for the transgression of my people?

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked
and with a rich man in his death,
although he had done no violence,
and there was no deceit in his mouth.

¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him;
he has put him to grief;
when his soul makes an offering for guilt,
he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his
days;
the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

¹¹ Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and
be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my
servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

¹² Therefore I will divide him a portion with the
many,
and he shall divide the spoil with the strong,
because he poured out his soul to death
and was numbered with the transgressors;
yet he bore the sin of many,
and makes intercession for the
transgressors.

John Stott: “The concept of substitution may be said, then, to lie at the heart of both sin and salvation. For the essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives that belong to God alone; God accepts penalties that belong to man alone.”

Russell Moore, The Storm-Tossed Family: “Whatever you are facing right now, whatever you have faced in your past, whatever you will face in your future, none of it is your “worst case scenario.” Your worst-case scenario is being crucified under the curse of the Law outside the gates of Jerusalem. *If you’re in Christ, that’s already happened to you!* The worst is over.”

3. Sermon Reflection:

Isaiah 53:1-12 (10-17-21: The Suffering Servant)

THE WORST PROBLEM

- What is the problem of suffering?
- What is the blessing of suffering?

THE LORD’S RESPONSE

- What is God’s response to our suffering?
- What has God done about it?
- How is He drawing you into a life of suffering?

WHAT CHANGES FOR US?

- What does it mean to pour our soul out unto death?
- How does this practice of “soul pouring” increase our wonder and delight in Jesus?
- What does that mean for us if we trust Him?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Praise God for His profound wisdom in saving us in Christ by using weakness. Worship Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His kindness and strength to take our place and bear our guilt and wreckage.

2. How are you guilty of trusting in human power (skill, beauty, or riches) to meet your ultimate needs? *Confess your idolatry to Jesus and trust Him to wash you and change your heart to trust Him more than anyone or anything.*

3. Give thanks to Jesus for His willingness to suffer to rescue people like us! Thank Him for bearing *pain, ugliness, rejection, sorrow, worthlessness, guilt and even death* in order to totally solve the problem of our brokenness.

4. Who is closest to you that does not know Christ? Pray for them, asking the Lord to pour out His Spirit into their hearts to open their eyes to see and their ears to hear Him as their God and Savior.

5. Ask the Spirit to give you understanding into God's ways and how He binds Himself to His people in love and mercy. Pray for God's work in your weakness and to open your eyes where you've been blind.

5. **Mission:** Christians are people on mission and our mission is to become less so that others would have the most.

Think about the past week:

- Who is suffering that you can call, text, or write a note to encourage and love?
- How are you suffering that you can meet with someone and pray together?
- Who is pouring their soul out that you can call with ears to listen and words of love?

Think of the week ahead:

- Who can you pour your soul out for?
- When will you schedule a time to refuel and rejoice in the Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit for the life of suffering that is yours to grow your faith and love and for God and others?
- When will you have an opportunity to position yourself in the low place so that you can make intercession for the transgressions of others?
- How can you become hideous so that others may become beautiful?

6. **Jesus From Others**

Close your time together in letting each person share something they came to love about Jesus from something someone in the group shared during your time together.

- What do you love more about Jesus from what someone shared during our CG tonight?