

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 Text: Isaiah 54:1-10 (ESV)

Title: Isaiah: The Love Story

Teacher: Jeremy Kemp

¹ "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD. ² "Enlarge the place of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. ³ For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

⁴ Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵ For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶ For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷ For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. ⁸ In overflowing anger for a moment I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer.

⁹ "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. ¹⁰ For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

The Storyline – The Love Story – Idolatry is Adultery but we have a "Unique Heavenly Husband"

The back story is that all of creation results from the wonder of God, Father, Son and Spirit and their delight in each other. So, there was first relationship, love, then there was creation, stuff or doings. Creation is the display of God's delight in Himself and His desire for us to join Him in that same delight. But rather than join to enjoy Him, we separated and delighted in what He made more than in God Himself. This idolatry of ourselves leads to our adultery with His stuff. We walk from Him to worship idols with our bodies, minds, affections, and ambitions while encouraging our friends to do the same.

But in God's steadfast love for us He has limited what Satan can offer to only be those things that never satisfy. So, God's steadfast love that sticks to us as we turn our backs to Him and walk away in sin and rebellion, this hesed at just the right time draws us back to Him, restores us, and reigns over and in us. He is our Goel, our redeemer, who sets us free from slavery and cleanses us from our whoring to make us a bride without spot or blemish, righteous forever and ever. Jesus does this in His moments on the Cross where God turns His back on Jesus for our desertion and He pours His wrath on Jesus for the sins we, his bride, has, are and will commit. Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus. What a love! What a story! What a Love Story!

Themes

- The Bachelor
- Coming King
- Suffering Servant
- Idolatry / Adultery
- Walk away
- Pursuit of God
- Hesed – Steadfast Love
- Goel – Redeemer
- Unique Heavenly Husband
- Divorce
- Marriage
- Singleness
- Dignified

1. Launchers:

- What have you desired so much that you walked away from God to have it?
- How have you experienced the pursuit of God?

2. Worship: Dependence and Need matched by God's Love and Compassion**Disconnecting from your current circumstances by rejoice in a promised future.**

¹ "Sing, O barren one, who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in labor! For the children of the desolate one will be more than the children of her who is married," says the LORD. ² "Enlarge the place of your tent and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes. ³ For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.

Delighting in (hesed) the Steadfast Love of our Redeemer (Goel) for His MOMENT on the Cross where Jesus was deserted and experienced the anger of our Heavenly Father.

⁴ Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. ⁵ For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. ⁶ For the LORD has called you like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. ⁷ **For a brief moment** I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. ⁸ **In overflowing anger for a moment** I hid my face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you," says the LORD, your Redeemer.

Worship God for the giving of His indwelling Holy Spirit, His Covenant and His Shalom

⁹ "This is like the days of Noah to me: as I swore that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not be angry with you, and will not rebuke you. ¹⁰ For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

3. Sermon Reflection: The Love Story Isaiah 54:1-10

The Adultery of Man

- How is idolatry spiritual adultery?
- Assessment -
 - How have you offered your body in your idolatry and adultery?
 - Your affections?
 - Your ambitions?
 - Your mind?
 - Your future?
 - What do you love more than God?

The Pursuit of God

- How has God's hesed or steadfast love won your heart?
- How has God as your Goel, redeemer, given you hope and confidence in tough circumstances?

Communion – Do this, give your flesh and blood, in remembrance of me.

- How does the celebration of communion empower your love for others?
- What are you willing to endure for the salvation of your neighbors?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US ...

1. Worship God for not just tolerating you but delighting over you as a husband delights over his wife.
2. Confess your wrong impressions of God leading to wrong thoughts, words, and deeds.
3. Thank Jesus for His washing us as white as a bride on her wedding day, taking our sins on Himself and giving us His perfection.
4. Pray for the marriages in your life, that they would reflect the lavish love of God in Christ.
5. Pray for your own marriage or singleness, that you would be satisfied by God's lavish love and move towards others with that love.

5. Mission: People on Mission to love the barren, the fearful, confounded and disgraces.

- Who will you get to be with next week who is discouraged, disgraced, barren and fearful?
 - Pray for them.
 - How can you love them? Encourage them? Bless them?

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?