

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

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**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.

**The Storyline – The End of Oppression for us and others.**

There is nothing better in this life, death, or the life to come than being a Christian. Jesus coming under our deserved oppression to free us to love our God and dwell with Him, Him delighting in us and us delighting in Him. On that day, that day of days, all evil will be quarantined, and we will experience no more tears, pain, or oppression for ever more. But now, we have a taste of the freedom purchased for us by Christ, but we toil in a world where sin and evil are allowed to work. In that day they will be no more but now we labor to “joy” others and enjoy them to “joy” in Jesus. We trust in the work of the Living One and labor to invite others to same. So, this Holiday season ask the Lord to open your eyes to see those under oppression and help them yoke to Jesus, whose burden is easy and light, by trusting in His work, not their own.

- *Who doesn't know why you have hope even in the midst of all that's wrong?*
- *How could you share your joy in Christ this week?*
- *Who in your life is “under” law, oppression, a burden?*

## Themes

- Tyranny
- Oppression
- Freedom
- Disgrace
- Under
- Threat
- Guilt
- Joy
- Wrench
- Victor

**1. Launchers: Are you under tyranny?**

- Tyranny is defined as “cruel and oppressive government or rule.”
  - Where have you experienced it?
  - Why is it wrong?

**2. Worship God – Isaiah 25:9 “Behold it will be said on “that day”, Behold, this is our God!**

Worship God for “the day” that is to come. Let your hearts rejoice in the new day, the new city, and that the dwelling place of God is with man.

Revelation 21:1–8,22-27 (ESV)

**The New Heaven and the New Earth**

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup>And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup>And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. <sup>4</sup>He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup>And he who was seated on the throne said, “Behold, I am making all things new.” Also, he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup>And he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning, and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. <sup>7</sup>The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. <sup>8</sup>But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death.”

**The New Jerusalem**

<sup>22</sup>And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. <sup>23</sup>And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. <sup>24</sup>By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, <sup>25</sup>and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup>They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. <sup>27</sup>But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

**3. Sermon Reflection: Isaiah 25:1-9 (12-19-21: The End of Oppression)****WHAT IS THE TENSION?**

- What is the threat of tyranny vs. the beauty of freedom?
- What are the ingredients in your vision of freedom?
  - Is it freedom from any obligation?
  - Or is it *finally freedom to live in line with God’s heart?*

**WHO IS THE VICTOR?**

- How have you dealt with oppression?
  - When have you been oppressed and what did you do?
  - When have you noticed others were experiencing oppression and what did you do?
- How has the LORD worked to overthrow all oppression?

**WHAT HAPPENS TO HIS PEOPLE?**

- What happens when the LORD takes away death?
- Where have you felt the load of your guilt burying you?
- What if you trusted Jesus to lift your burden and set you free?

**4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:**

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Praise the LORD for His almighty goodness and final victory over all evil. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that He is kind to deliver us from sin's oppression and faithful to overthrow all pride and evil.
2. How have you been blind to your slavery to sin and self? Confess your pride to Jesus, asking Him to cleanse you by His death, and to free you by His resurrection power.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for His delivering work. Thank Him for bearing the load of your guilt to take away your reproach (by His death) and swallowing up death forever (by His resurrection).
4. Pray for someone that you know is needy. Ask the Lord to be to them a shelter or a shade from oppression. Ask Him also to provide for them and also to move you to help them however you can.
5. Ask the Spirit to bear in you His fruit of love and joy. Pray for His work to secure you in Jesus so firmly that you can confidently share the reason for your hope in Him.

**5. Mission: Eyes to see and Hands to help those under oppression.**

There is nothing better in this life, death, or the life to come than being a Christian. Jesus coming under our deserved oppression to free us to love our God and dwell with Him, Him delighting in us and us delighting in Him. On that day, that day of days, all evil will be quarantined, and we will experience no more tears, pain, or oppression for ever more. But now, we have a taste of the freedom purchased for us by Christ, but we toil in a world where sin and evil are allowed to work. In that day they will be no more but now we labor to "joy" others and enjoy them to "joy" in Jesus. We trust in the work of the Living One and labor to invite others to same. So, this Holiday season ask the Lord to open your eyes to see those under oppression and help them yoke to Jesus, whose burden is easy and light, by trusting in His work, not their own.

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**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?