

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.

1. Launchers:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word “freedom”?
- How about “Christian freedom”?

2. Worship God – Christmas ... When the time had fully come God sent

Unto us a child is born. Worship God for we are to become as one of these, a child.

Isaiah 9:6–7 (ESV) ⁶For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Luke 2:1–7 (ESV) **2** In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luke 18:15–17 (ESV). **15** Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. **16** But Jesus called them to him, saying, “**Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.** **17** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.”

Galatians 4:4–7 (ESV) **4** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

3. Sermon Reflection: John 8:31-38 The Only Freedom Indeed**Longing for Freedom**

- When did you realize we were made for freedom?
- What were the circumstances that caused you too long to be free?

Our Delusion

- How have been delusional – having a fixed false reality – about your ability to set yourself free?
- What is our response to Jesus’ gracious offer?

The Certainty of our Rescue

- What has Jesus done with our enslavement?
- Do you trust Jesus to save you to such a degree that you are now have a new classification ... a child of God?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:Prayers

1. Worship the LORD for his infinite mercy in liberating us out of bondage. Praise Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that we are no longer slaves, but heirs in his Kingdom.
2. Have you ever lived in arrogance towards God's invitation? Confess your pride to Jesus and admit that you are in dire need of help.
3. Give thanks to Jesus that He is our only rescue, and that his proclamation over us as "Free, indeed" is complete.
4. Pray for someone that you know whose life seems to be so much intact, that they don't feel their desperate need for a Savior. Pray that Holy Spirit would convict their hearts of their evil, allowing them to run to the breaker of chains.
5. Ask the Spirit to bear in you His fruit of freedom and joy. Pray that His work to bring us out of captivity would be so prevalent in our being that we would live loving God and loving neighbor.

5. Mission: 2021 Reflection / 2022 Anticipation

I love the Christmas / New Year holiday season. It is a blessed time to get with friends and family to enjoy reflecting on God's goodness and faithfulness from the previous year and then try to anticipate the chores He has for us in the year to come. What fun!

Here are the questions I use each year. Have fun. Make up your own. Keep them. Save them. Invite family, friends, new and old to join the fun of thinking toward God and all the adventures and blessings of following, loving and serving Him.

2021 Reflection / 2022 Anticipation - template

1. How has God shown Himself great to you this past year? Or why do you faith/believe more cuz of the gift of God to you of 2021?
2. What character quality is the most critical for you to develop in the year 2022?
3. What spiritual discipline (Examples: Bible reading, meditation, Family Worship, Evangelism, Prayer, Thanksgiving) is most critical for you to master or be mastered by in the year 2022?
4. What personal habit, practice or character deficiency is the greatest threat to your life and ministry?
5. Name 5 people that you most desire to come to love Jesus in the year 2022.

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?