

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:

- How confident are you right now about the future?

2. Worship God – Use the Call to Worship and Assurance of Pardon to Worship our Great God.

Read the Call to Worship as a praise to God for His Glory and Greatness, Uniqueness and Power.

Call – John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it

Assure your heart of your good future by rejoicing in the work of Jesus to make a son or a daughter of God.

Assurance – John 1:11-14 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

3. Sermon Reflection: Isaiah 9:2-7 (12-5-21: Unto Us A Child Is Born)

WE WALK IN DARKNESS – What happens when we turn from God?

Why are we unworthy to rule the world?
What don't we see that disqualifies us? What don't we know?
How convinced are you that you are incompetent?
What considerations humble you most often?

A GREAT LIGHT SHINING – God worthy and capable to “govern”

Why is He alone worthy to rule the world?
What do you like best about our Father's Kingdom rule, His governance?
How well do you know and love the King both his heart and habits of governing His Kingdom?

AMAZING CONSEQUENCES – Trusting His Rule, Loving Him and His Governance

So, what happens when we trust Him to rule the world?
How does trusting Him change you?
How does trusting Him change your view of yourself, others, stuff, circumstances, addictions, hope, enemies, friends, family, the holidays, and the future?

4. **Kingdom Centered Prayer:**

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His all-powerful rule, especially that He IS Light, and that He shines in the darkness. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His mercy to not crush us, *but rather save us*.
2. How can you see the effects of darkness in your life from seeking to rule your own life rather than trusting God's sovereign rule? Confess your pride and unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and heal you.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for His work to humble Himself in true weakness to atone for our rebellion. *Thank Him for being born, and given to even us, to remove our guilt (by His death) and heal our brokenness (by His resurrection).*
4. Who do you know that does not understand humility? Pray for them, asking the Lord to give them insight into Jesus' coming as the Most High becoming the most low, taking on human form.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in your life His fruit of joy and generosity, especially toward those in your life who are broken. Pray that He would help you move toward them as He has moved toward you.

5. **Mission:** Prayer as preparation to Love. "Have a Prayer Card Holiday".

Pray for each person you will get to be with this week, this month, and this Holiday Season by making a prayer card for each day, each week, each event, or each gathering. Have fun with it. Pray and watch God work. Reflect each day on what God did or is doing in your friendships and conversations.

1. Get a 3 x 5 card.
2. Think about the week ahead, both events and people.
3. Put the names and events on the card.
4. Set an appointment on your calendar each morning and again each evening to meet with God and pray.
5. Write on the back of the card what you notice God doing in and through your prayers.
6. Be encouraged. Praise God. Love God. Trust God.
7. Ask for His Kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven.

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?