

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 - 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: Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16 & Genesis 12:1-7 (ESV) **Title:** By Faith: Abram **Teacher:** Tim Rice

Hebrews 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰ For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ... ¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴ For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵ If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶ But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. ... Genesis 12:1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." ⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

The Storyline – Christianity is pure wonderful weirdness. A Christian is weird, lives weird, talks weird, acts weird. A Christian makes weird choices, has weird habits, hears weird voices, lives in weird spaces, has weird priorities, passions, purposes, and prizes weird possessions, like books and relationships over power and position AND AIN'T IT GRAND. We are the original cancel culture. We are born twice and die twice. We sing about an empty cross. We, Christians believe the best is what you CAN'T see. And best of all, we die weird! We celebrate our death as our greatest accomplishment. And it is all on display for us in our founding Father Abraham's Faith so let's get out our freak flags and "let fly" for all to see so they can come join us in the fun we are having in this **WEIRD JESUS COMMUNITY OF LOVE For ETERNITY!**

Themes:

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| • Leave, Depart | • Away, To | • Jesus left to go into death, sin |
| • Go | • Identity | • Your, your, your |
| • Exile, sojourner | • External Reference | • I will, I will, I will |
| • Abraham | • Circles | • Special place of presence |
| • Ur of the Chaldeans | • Flight New Orleans / Tpa | • Repentance |
| • Canaan Land | • Is there proof? | |
| • Land | • Can you prove you are an alien? | |
| • Who are you? | • Call to Himself | |
| • Whose are you? | • Gestation – this period for us | |
| • Future – External Reference | | |

1. Launcher

(10 min)

- Tell a story from your life when God told you:
 - To Leave
 - To Go
 - And be and exile, sojourner.
 - How did that experience grow your love and faith for God?

2. Worship: The rhythm of **Worship** – **God** then **Man**, **Heaven** then **Earth** (10 min) **Heaven** then **Earth**, **God** then **Us**, **You** then **me**. Selfishness destroys all spirituality.

Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you... 9 seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience

Hebrews 12:1–2 (ESV) ¹ Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Read each passage pausing to worship **our Father who is in Heaven** and **be thankful for our work here on earth**.

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Intro: Why does God have the right to call us wherever He wants?

LEAVE - What does God call us away from?

- What have you left to follow Jesus? Has it been worth it?
- What did Jesus leave to follow God? Was it worth it?

GO TO - What does the LORD call us to?

- What has God called you to? Is it the joy set before you?
- What did God call Jesus to? How was it His joy?

EXILES ON THE EARTH - As people defined by His Grace, *what* are we and *whose* are we?

- What are you? Whose are you?
- What difference does that make in relationships, occupation, entertainment choices, your use of time, your use of money?

- What is Jesus? Whose is Jesus? – What are we because of Him?
- What difference did that make and does that make in Jesus' relationships, occupation, entertainment choices, use of his time, talents and treasures?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

1. Worship the LORD for His goodness in all that He calls us to as His people. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His eternal and loving plans – and for how He is trustworthy in anything He calls us to.
2. How have you lived far more oriented toward this world and what is temporary than to Jesus and eternity. Confess your folly and unbelief to Jesus, *asking Him to forgive you and to rewire your heart toward Him and heaven.*
3. Give thanks to Jesus for how He left His home to come rescue us from sin and death and redeem us unto Him. Thank Him for moving beyond anything “we do” instead to assure us by all that *He* has done and will do.
4. Who do you know that lives for here and now, ignoring God and eternity? Pray for them, asking Jesus to help awaken them to their peril, their folly, and God's glory so that, like Abraham, they would repent and believe.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of joy, goodness and His eternal perspective. *Pray that He would help you see things in their true eternal light* – all that is temporary and fleeting vs. all that is lasting and good.

5. Mission: Press on to that “other country” & help others do same (10 min)

C.S. Lewis: “Most people, if they had really learned to look into their own hearts, would know that what they *do want*, and want acutely, is *something that cannot be had in this world*. There are all sorts of things in this world that offer to give it to you, but they never quite keep their promise... *and if I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world... and I must keep alive in myself the desire for my true country, which I shall not find till after death*; I must never let it get snowed under or turned aside; *I must make it the main object of life to press on to that other country & to help others to do the same.*”

- What does it mean to *press on to that “other country”*?
- When will you have an opportunity to press on to that “other country” this week?
- How can we help others do the same?

6. Jesus From Others (10 min)

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?