

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

Sermon: By Faith: Jacob- Hebrews 11:21, Genesis 48:8-22

The Storyline

Entropy is the notion of starting strong and finishing poorly or not at all. Jacob is a mess. He lies. He cheats. He manipulates. Jacob is pure rascal. BUT He finishes strong, even GREAT! No entropy for Jacob. Like the NFL referees are apt to say, "Upon further review".... Jacob sets off to make his own way and when it does not work out as he had planned his impression is that God has abandoned him or at least turned His back. But "upon further review", Jacob concludes that God was, is and always will be His Shepherd and that every aspect of Jacob's life was orchestrated by God for Jacob's good and God's great glory. Old age gives us an opportunity to look back on the wonder and beauty of God's goodness and His guiding grace in the adventure of our lives from birth to death and every moment in between. Conclusion: The older we are the more wonder, the more amazement, the more mercy, the more forgiveness, the more blessing we have received so the more eager we are to worship and serve Him because He has been so very, very good to us.

So, are you lost? Upon further review, in God, YOU ARE FOUND! Are you alone? Upon further review, God is with you always! Are you a liar? Upon further review, God is YOUR truth. Are you discouraged? Upon further review, God is YOUR HOPE! Are you knocking it out of the park? Upon further review, God is your generous gift giver! Are you in a difficult marriage? Upon further review, God is your spouse. Are you broke? Upon further review, God is your provider! Are you? God is... Are you? God is.... And God is our everything forever and ever more.

Themes

- Jacob
- Abraham, Isaac
- Liar, rascal
- God
- Blessing
- Shepherd
- Character
- Generation
- Aged
- Worship
- Dying
- Habits of Greatness
- Great at 70 years old
- Believing in a Redeemer
- Blessing younger
- Blessing Older

1. Launchers : (10 min)

- What does greatness look like for you at 70 years old?
- What habits or skills are essential for you to ask God to develop in you so that you can be great at 70 years old?

2. Worship: Worship God by Listing All His Benefits of (10 min)

Give each person a sheet of paper and pen. Read the passage together. Then give them a minute or 2 to list the benefits of God. Encourage your hearts by having them share them with each other.

Psalm 103:1-11

OF DAVID. ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!

² Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,

³ who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,

⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,

who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

⁵ who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

⁷ He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.

⁸ The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Sermon: By Faith: Jacob- Hebrews 11:21, Genesis 48:8-22

Introduction: Ask for a volunteer to tell the context or setting of Jacob blessing Joseph's sons. Give Jacob's story including his character.

1. The God of the Blessing

- What did it mean to Jacob that his forefathers lived before the face of God?
- What is encouraging about living before the face of God?
- What makes that scary?
- Have each person write a blessing from God, our Father, over them.

2. My Shepherd in the Blessing

- How did Jacob know God to be his faithful shepherd?
- How do you know God to be your faithful shepherd?
- When have you thought of or actually corrected God in His shepherding of your life?
- What trials have become your blessings?

3. The Next Generation of the Blessing

- Who has been a blessing to you from the previous generation?
- Who is coming behind you that you can bless?
- What habits or skills is God developing in you now so you will be equipped to serve and bless others 10 years from now?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

PRAYERS

1. Worship the LORD for His kindness and his sovereignty. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that He orchestrates all details of our life to bring about his perfect plan and our worship to Him.
2. Confess ways your heart has become hard toward God and others. Reflect on areas of your life where arrogance and pride drive you, rather than humility.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for his work to secure our adoption. Praise Him that He was perfect in his obedience to the Father because we are not able, and that He paid for our sins and gives us His righteousness, so that we could become the children of God.
4. Who do you know that has a heart that is hard toward the gospel. Pray for them, that they would see all of life as an opportunity to be brought low, to cry out to God, and would know their need for a savior.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you be a more thoughtful and reflective person. That you would see thankfulness grow in you toward God and what he has done, is doing, and will do in your life.

5. Mission: Bless those who have invested in your life! (10 min)

This week think of all the folks who have been a blessing in your life and let them know what they mean to you. Text them. Call them. Send a handwritten note. Bless them back. Make a list. Have fun. Feel the blessing of God on you through these dear ones.

- Our forefathers and mothers – those who came before us.
- Peers – those who walked with us some part of our journey
- The generations to come – bless the next generation

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?