

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 11:23-27; Exodus 2:23-3:10 (ESV) **Title:** By Faith: Moses **Teacher:** Tim Rice

Hebrews 11:23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw that the child was beautiful, and they were not afraid of the king's edict. ²⁴ By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵ choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. ²⁶ He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. ²⁷ By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.

The Storyline – Hooked and Oppressed – Who has hooked who?

The Storyline – Hooked and Oppressed, Means and Image – Who has hooked who?

How do you know when *you have something* or when IT HAS YOU? I know some folks of profound talent and means that live lives of great freedom and joy. The reason is simple. They have their wealth or gifts *it does not have them*. Then I know of some folks of very moderate means and abilities who are possessed by wealth and talent. It owns them. It is in their every thought. It is how they evaluate all of humanity and the worth of their friends. Strange but **what they don't have actually has them**. Some folks are oppressed by what they have while others by what they don't have and can't be. Again, there is a dear couple of incredible accomplishment and appeal, approved by everyone who knows them but to be in their presence is to experience peace, delight, joy and feeling of real pleasure in just being you. Their appeal does not own them. They own it. Then there is my friend that agreed to a path forward but could not follow through on the healthy path she had chosen because she did not know what her friends on Facebook would say. So I said, "Well just call them or even better go meet with them so you can explain what you are doing and why. I am sure they will understand." She looked at me puzzled then said, "TimO, I don't know them. I have never met them so I have no idea how to get together with them." Hooked. She is hooked. As my grandpa would say, "she's gut hooked." Most of us are. We are corrupt appraisers. Think of it. Lust is right appraisal – the human body is beautiful – wrong application – and I want that one for me. Or greed as another example, right value – the car is amazing – wrong ownership – and I am going to buy one for me whether God wants me to have one or not. The list goes on and on. Love of money. Love of fame. Fear of ridicule. Fear of Shame. Our miss calibrated value system is off. Way off. We love what we should hate and hate what we should love. The culture, wealth, popularity, unbelievers, all of them can be oppressive. Jesus saw us as harassed and helpless. And so we are. But what to do. What to do. Crosswalk. That is what we do. We "from and to". We leave and cleave. We crosswalk.

Crosswalking is to cry out to Holy Spirit, our crossing guard and hold his hand as we trust him to walk us out of the world and into the Kingdom of God. We humble ourselves by confessing our misappraising and its offensiveness to God and confess the beauty of God and godliness by ascribing to Him the glory due His Name. We then give all we have, to have all He is. Then and only then is the Kingdom of God ours.

Themes

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| • Oppression | • Choose Rather | • Saw, knew |
| • Wealth | • Crosswalk | • Fleeting Sin |
| • Approval | • Traitors | • Fear |
| • Associations | • Narnia | • Gov't Edict |
| • Pressure | • Heard, remembered | • Pressure |

1. Launchers: Sharing our “if only _____, I had then I’d be happy”(10 min)

- Reflect on your life. What 5 “if only” desires or pursuits did you have growing up that you were certain if attained would make you happy?
- What did the attainment or pursuit of them do to your heart and your love for others?
- What were you like to be with or be around?

2. Worship by “Choosing Rather” Our God over all other offers (10 min)

Read the following verses straight through. Then go back and read each pausing to “crosswalk” after each set of verses. Spiritual Crosswalking is a from – to practice of repentance and faith. Spiritual Crosswalking is to turn you back to the world and leave it (“from” = repentance) then walk the Kingdom of God on the other side (“to” = faith). Ascribe to the Lord the glory do His Name.

Matthew 13:44 (ESV) ⁴⁴ “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Philippians 3:7–16 (ESV) ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith— ¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹² Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³ Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

¹⁵ Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. ¹⁶ Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Unbelieving Opposition –

- When have you sensed or experienced oppression for following Jesus?
- What are your expectations for 5, 10 & 20 years from now?
- How are you preparing for it?

Divine Guarantees

- What are the promises of God for those who believe?
 - Why does He promise suffering and persecution for His followers?
 - What does suffering and threats produce in a believer’s heart?
 - What are His promises of his presence with you in suffering that encourage your heart the most?
 - What present and future eternal rewards make walking away from wealth and acclaim worth it?

Confident Faith

- How does the experience of the fleeting pleasures of sin build your confidence in God?
- How is the ridicule of Christ greater value for your soul than the wealth of all the world and the praise of all its inhabitants?
- How does ridicule increase your delight in Jesus and your salvation?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His Holiness, especially in comparison to any created thing, person or experience. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His *surpassing* worth.
2. How have you lived as if the treasures (or pleasures) of this world are better than Jesus? Confess your unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you for rejecting Him, and that He would renew your heart to see Him in light of His true worth.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for how He is powerful to save us (vs. our impotence or the inadequacy of created things to last or satisfy). Thank Him for His compassion to us in our bondage to sin, death and hell.
4. Who do you know that is entranced by the things of this world (and therefore blind to Jesus)? Pray for them, asking the Lord to open their eyes to the vanity of all created things vs. Jesus' enduring worth and glory.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of love and peace, especially in the face of opposition from this world. Pray for His strength and power to sustain you as you seek to live faithfully for Jesus.

5. Mission: to love our neighbor is to love our oppressors (10 min)

Embedded in the love of God is enemy loving love so we are to love our oppressors.

- Think of those who are in your life who oppressed you. How could you have loved them with the Love of God?
- Think of those folks who are oppressive to you now. How can you love them with the love of God?

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?