

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 (OPTIONAL) - 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 – By Faith: Gideon, Hebrew 11:32, Judges 6**The Storyline –** By Faith Gideon: The least of the weakest fellowships with Best of the Greatest

Being a Christian is the greatest ever. Think of it. Greatness fueled by humility. Humility as the key to greatness. Who knew? I sure did not. Materialism makes you productive but arrogant and then religion or mysticism makes you humble but not productive. Christianity is the spirit of the greatest worker who produces a product so amazing that the only display case worthy of its glory is a WHOLE NEW CREATION OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. How great is that!!

There is nothing like following Jesus. Renouncing all that does not matter to have the Living One who makes all things matter. And how bout our hero in today's By Faith look at our older brother Gideon. He titles himself as "the least of the weakest" as a disqualifier that actually becomes the very attributes that causes the salvation of many. The empty vessel becomes the stream of living water. Victory in the few displays the glory of our God and King to the many. Hooray! Hooray!

Anxiety results from being brought to a crisis of faith – when what is required of you exceeds your resources – then to experience weakness, feel overwhelmed, and acknowledge the pending doom as a functioning atheist believing God neither cares nor will He help. Faith is to enjoy the trials of God for our good and his glory producing unmistakable joy.

Fear is to ponder the future as if God is mean and as if He likes hurting you. Faith processes all that is and will be knowing that God is good and can only do good to us, for us and in us for all eternity because we know Him as our loving Heavenly Father.

Themes

- Gideon
- Atonement
- Meal
- Fellowship offering
- Alter
- Baal
- Convenience vs Prosperity
- Posture and perspective
- I will be with you.
- Repent / Pursue
- Away/Hold
- Leave/Go
- Circumstances vs Character
- Glory
- Boasting
- Idols – Cruel, Insecure
- Renounce All follow Jesus

1. Launchers: (10 min)

- What circumstances in your life make you doubt God's love and power because rather than change them He is inviting you to trust Him in them?
- What continuing, lifelong weakness, frailty, relational brokenness or appetite for sin exposed in your lack character makes you mad at God rather than rejoice in His humbling love and care for you that you would always live in desperate need of Him?

2. Worship: The Wisdom of the Prudent: discern His Ways (10 min)

Worship the Lord for God's greatness to make Himself known to you in your utter dependence on Him. Gideon honored God by acknowledging that he was the least of the weakest. Read the following passage and rejoice in the Lord for His saving mercy and brilliance to humble and love us.

1 Corinthians 1:26–31 (ESV) ²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, ²⁹ so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. ³⁰ And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, ³¹ so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

3. Sermon Reflection: (10 min)

Intro: Rightly discerning our own capacities is a part of wisdom

WHAT IS GOD DOING?

What was Gideon confused about?

WHAT DOES GOD COMMAND?

What is significant about God's call to Gideon?

WHAT CAN MAKE SENSE OF THIS?

So God ate a meal with Gideon... why was *that* reassuring?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer: (10 min)

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His sovereign authority and grace. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that He is worthy of all trust and loyalty and that no one and no thing can possibly compare with Him.
2. How have you lived as if God's job is to order out desirable circumstances for you, rather than for you to live faithfully for Him no matter what your circumstances? Confess your proud, demanding spirit to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and heal your thinking.
3. Give thanks to Jesus for His work to free us from false gods and how enslaving they are. Thank Him for entering into our death, even when we're selfish, and guaranteeing our hope by His resurrection.
4. Who do you know that blames God for their hardships and is blind to His discipline? Pray for them, asking the Lord to help them to see their true need for Him and His glory and holiness over all competitors.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of love and hope. Pray for such a confidence in Jesus, and His work to humble Himself into our sin, that you would be secure when you face humbling circumstances and hardships.

5. Mission: Laugh at yourself this week. Have Weak – Week! (10 min)

God made you weak and frail so that you could know and experience his power and might. Enjoy it. Be bold. Brag and boast about your weirdness. So be bold this week in your weakness and need. Laugh. Become fun to be around by making little of yourself and much of your friends and enemies. Be fun to be with my making fun of yourself. Invite others to enjoy their foibles and flaws, their goofiness and guffaws. Reflect with others how needy and weak you are this week. Boast in it. Let them know you are a mess and what a big mess you are.

By Faith Gideon was the least of the weakest. AND GOD LOVES THAT ABOUT HIM AND US!

Mission: Celebrate everyone you meet this week by letting each person you meet with know why you admire them and how their life encourages you.

Each morning this week. Look at your calendar. Make a list of who will get to be with and think of what you enjoy about them and let them know by telling them how great they are at doing something that you could never do. Bless them with your ineptness and their brilliance.

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?