

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 – The God who Shatters**The Storyline – The God who Shatters or Where Do We Seek Comfort? By Jack Miller**

I kept thinking of this story by Jack Miller to best illustrate Isaiah's encounter with God and a summary of Tim's Sermon. The God who Shatters is the God who Gathers. This is an excerpt from a letter from Jack Miller to a friend whose husband has been fired from his position of pastor at their church

This Saturday morning, I have been praying for you and for your family. I want to be able to pray effectively for you, and I think I can pray most effectively if I share with you what I have been asking from God. The first thing I have been asking is that all of you may have unity, and oneness as a family in discovering God's purpose in what has happened. But I think that a great hindrance in discovering and following God's will is our difficulty in believing that His will is good-and good for me. We need to learn to love God's will if we are to be mature believers, but we can hardly love His will if inside ourselves we have not been persuaded that His will is for our good and is itself a good will.

I was in a very shattering experience in Uganda a few months ago, lost in the dark in a small boat during a storm on Lake Victoria. The whole thing seemed senseless, going from bad to worse, without prayers being answered. In the blackness and the rain and the utter misery of the cold, my last comfort was the sound of the Johnson outboard motor. I asked God to keep it going, and hardly asked for it when off it went. We were adrift, very literally powerless, directionless, and exposed to who knows what, including pirates who prowl the seas of the lake. There was just God, seemingly battering us. I don't know how to interpret it all, but I do know that as the water sloshed over my feet, there was a kind of message in it, one that I didn't like. It was simply that God was still a God of infinite love and compassion, but not according to my ideas, but to His; and I had to see that I was not in any way in the same league with Him. Only as I submitted my proud heart to His Bigness and Majesty and Will could I really experience His love.

I don't know if any of that makes sense to you, but it comes down to God's insistence that He is God and only in my accepting that can I know Him. What this has led me to see is a second thing. It is the necessity of stopping, being patient, waiting, listening to God, right in the circumstances that overwhelm, right where I am tempted to feel left out and hurt. There I meet His grace as He meets me in silence. I need the silence; I need the time without easy answers that I may see that God's Fatherhood is not something simply for me to use, but a love of heart to heart and the willingness to walk with Him no matter what is happening.

I hope this makes sense. Life is inescapably a way of pain. The only question finally is where we seek our comfort. If we seek our comfort in the Father of Lord Jesus Christ, then we will know joy and fulfillment beyond anything we ever imagined. In the darkness a plan will begin to emerge. The plan must not be rushed, but it will come. It is much too early for me to presume to suggest what I believe it maybe for your family, but be sure it is there, waiting to be discerned through a time of learning to wait and listen to His teaching voice.

I know that an earthly mind cannot grasp heavenly dealings, and my prayer is that you will together be given a mind that understands heavenly dealings.

Cordially in Christ,
Jack Miller

Themes

- Holy, Holy, Holy
- Obliteration
- Pulverize
- Shattering
- Atonement
- Mercy
- Grace
- Building Shakes
- Temple
- Place God meets Us
- Fueled by God

1. Launchers:

- When have you been the most terrified?... and then of God? Tell your story.

2. Worship: Taste and See That The Lord Is Good

Psalm 34 OF DAVID, WHEN HE CHANGED HIS BEHAVIOR BEFORE ABIMELECH, SO THAT HE DROVE HIM OUT, AND HE WENT AWAY.

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| <p>¹ I will bless the LORD at all times;
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.</p> <p>² My soul makes its boast in the LORD;
let the humble hear and be glad.</p> <p>³ Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!</p> <p>⁴ I sought the LORD, and he answered me
and delivered me from all my fears.</p> <p>⁵ Those who look to him are radiant,
and their faces shall never be ashamed.</p> <p>⁶ This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him
and saved him out of all his troubles.</p> <p>⁷ The angel of the LORD encamps
around those who fear him and delivers
them.</p> <p>⁸ Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good!
Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!</p> <p>⁹ Oh, fear the LORD, you his saints,
for those who fear him have no lack!</p> <p>¹⁰ The young lions suffer want and hunger;
but those who seek the LORD lack no good
thing.</p> <p>¹¹ Come, O children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.</p> <p>¹² What man is there who desires life</p> | <p>and loves many days, that he may see good?</p> <p>¹³ Keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.</p> <p>¹⁴ Turn away from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.</p> <p>¹⁵ The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous
and his ears toward their cry.</p> <p>¹⁶ The face of the LORD is against those who do
evil,
to cut off the memory of them from the
earth.</p> <p>¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.</p> <p>¹⁸ The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.</p> <p>¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous,
but the LORD delivers him out of them all.</p> <p>²⁰ He keeps all his bones;
not one of them is broken.</p> <p>²¹ Affliction will slay the wicked,
and those who hate the righteous will be
condemned.</p> <p>²² The LORD redeems the life of his servants;
none of those who take refuge in him will be
condemned.</p> |
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3. Sermon Reflection: Isaiah 6:1-13, The God Who Shatters

GOD REVEALS HIS HOLINESS

- What does it mean that God is holy?
- How is God's holiness our greatest threat that becomes our greatest blessing?

GUILT & ATONEMENT

- Why do we believe that God's graciousness is an aspect of His holiness?
- How does our guilt for our sin turn to worship through the atoning work of Jesus?
- What guilt for sin did Holy Spirit use this past week to draw you to confession, repentance and oneness?

A REDEEMED MESSENGER

- What does it mean to be commissioned to represent Him?
- How are you uniquely qualified to message the story of God's holiness and His Gracious Atonement?

4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His holiness – for His surpassing worth – *that there is no other Creator, Owner, Judge or Savior*. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit that He is truly unparalleled by anyone or anything.
2. *How have you lived as if God is replaceable – by you, your possessions, your loved ones, or almost anything?* Confess your arrogance to Jesus asking Him to forgive you for so insulting Him and to heal your foolishness.
3. *Give thanks to Jesus for His work to atone for your guilt*. Thank Him for atoning for all your sin so that by His work, He can heal and bring back together everything in you and in His world that you've torn apart.
4. Who do you know that fears God, but they do not trust that with the Lord there is forgiveness? Ask Jesus to "send fire from His altar" as it were to them – that He would assure them that He can blot out their sin.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you security in His worth and courage to be His ambassador even if people around you don't respond. Pray for words and hope He is able to give new life to those who are spiritually dead.

5. Mission: Our Mission and Quotes from Our Sermon

Tim regularly quotes others to often help him explain a point or many times to bring emphasis but always to fuel our mission with the energy of God. Read the following quotes from Tim's sermon notes asking Holy Spirit to speak to you about the coming week and how you might glorify Him in your work and words this week. In other words which quote gives you the mind of God for the week ahead.

1. Dorothy Sayers, Letters to a Diminished Church: "The people who hanged Christ, to do them justice, never accused him of being a bore – on the contrary, *they thought him too dynamic to be safe*. It has been left for later generations to muffle up that shattering personality and surround him with an atmosphere of [dullness]. *We have efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified him "meek and mild" and recommended him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies.*"
2. A.W. Tozer, Knowledge of the Holy: "We must not think of God as highest in an ascending order of beings, starting with the single cell and going on up from the fish to the bird to the animal to man to angel to cherub to God. God is as high above an archangel as above a caterpillar, for the gulf that separates the archangel from the caterpillar is but finite, while the gulf between God and the archangel is infinite."
3. Annie Dillard: "*On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? Churches are like children, to kill a Sunday morning, by playing on the floor with chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT. It is madness to wear ladies' velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets! Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping God may wake someday and take offense, OR the waking God may draw us out to where we can never return.*"
4. Upon A Life I Have Not Lived
 Upon a Life I have not lived, Upon a Death I did not die,
 Another's Life; Another's Death, I stake my whole eternity
 Not on the tears which I have shed,
 Not on the sorrows I have known,
 Another's tears; Another's griefs, On these I rest, on these alone.
 Jesus, Son of God, I build on what Thy cross has done for me;
 There both my death and life I read, my guilt, and pardon there I see

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?