

**Opening: Open Each Community Group Meeting by Reading the Community Grp Summary**

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**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 Storyline – Isaiah's Warning against arrogance and Promised Blessings to those who Believe**

The Tale of Two Cities is the story of those who look to God for Hope, Health and Life as His work done for them or those who look in hope to themselves, their desires, abilities, passions, and purposes. The first is God reliant and humble while the second is proud, loud, and self-confident. God desires for us to rejoice in Him and live in and on Him as He provides, directs, and delivers us peace and joy in the Good News of God for us in Jesus. Man-centeredness never works and never delivers. It is fleeting, temporal, and only disappoints.

So, God invites us to repent of our Us-ness and join Him in His work and promises. He gives us His One and Only Son Jesus for us to live, move and have our being. Our Father leads us to praise and worship as Jesus propitiates for our sin and God's judgment then gives us righteousness so that we are then adopted as God's very children. Now, as family members, we take up the work of the family business by loving and serving our neighbors with words and works ordained by God for us to walk in by His Spirit.

**Themes**

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|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| • Two Cities    | • Promises      | • Our efforts             |
| • Lofty City    | • Trust         | • Double Minded           |
| • Strong City   | • YHWH          | • Pride and Self-Reliance |
| • Peace         | • Forever       | • Humility and Weakness   |
| • Power         | • Shalom-Shalom | • Eye Surgery Example     |
| • Self Interest | • Peace-Peace   | • Internal – Not external |
| • Guarantees    | • God's Works   | • Eternal – Not Temporary |

**1. Launchers:**

- What is your anxiety level on a scale of 1-10? (10 being most anxious). If you were to describe your life as a weather condition, which would you choose?
- What more would God have to do for your heart to be at Shalom-Shalom or peace-peace even when in your busy life?

**2. Worship: Stayed on Him .... Your mind in perfect peace**

Read these verses Tim has selected from 2 Corinthians chapters 3, 4 and 5. Praise God for our weakness and His strength, our insufficiency and His abundant glory. You may find you need to read it over and over again. Each time finding more and more reasons to praise and worship Him but also greater depth to our utter need of Him.

2 Corinthians 3:4 Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit... and the Spirit gives life... 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom... 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. 11 For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh... 16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal... 5:5 He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always of good courage... 7 for we walk by faith, not by sight.

**3. Sermon Reflection:****Isaiah 26:1-8, 12 (8-29-21: A Tale of Two Cities)****Intro: What is a psalm of confidence?**

Take a few minutes to write one.

- Look and describe evil at work
- Lift your gaze to Heaven
- Trust God to turn the circumstances to your good and blessing

**WHAT IS WRONG HERE?**

What fuels the world? And what does evil present itself?

- Unrighteous to disadvantage others to advantage ourselves.
- Righteous to disadvantage ourselves to advantage others.

**WHO BRINGS US HOPE HERE?**

Why does it matter that the LORD promises protection?

How do the good works of Jesus give you assurance of a good hope and future?

What are God's practices of humbling you? What are your habits of humbling you?

**WHOSE WORK DEFINES YOU?**

Once you survey your options, what makes best sense to be defined by your work or God's work?

What does it mean that God has done for us all our works? Isaiah 26:12

How does that humble you yet give you grand confidence?

How does His work for you move you to work for Him?

**4. Kingdom Centered Prayer:**

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD for His goodness and faithfulness. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for all that He has done so far (recorded in His Word) and all that He promises yet ahead of us (prophesied).
2. How have you lived more influenced by the voices of this world rather than the Lord? *Confess your pride and unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and to stabilize you in His work (vs. your own efforts to secure your life).*
3. Give thanks to Jesus for the wonder of His saving work and victory over all that threatens us. Thank Him for His redeeming work, to cleanse us by His death, and to enliven us by His resurrection power.
4. Who do you know that is double-minded, living in the competing currents of this world vs. what God's says? Pray for them, asking the Lord to make His saving power known to them.
5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you His fruit of peace, especially as you see God's work and trustworthiness vs. the pride or self-interest of the world. Pray that He would grow you in your confidence in the LORD.

**5. Mission: Equipped for Every Good Work**

Christians are God's people on mission to do the work that God has prepared for them. Read the following passages. Then spend some time reflecting on the good work God has done for you, is doing in you and will do through you. List your chores this week and praise Him for the work He has prepared for you.

*Isaiah 26:12 (ESV) <sup>12</sup> O Lord, you will ordain peace for us, for you have indeed done for us all our works.*

*2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

*2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

*Colossians 3:17 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Reflection – God's good work. List what God has done for you, is doing in you and will do through you.

Anticipation – God's work He has prepared. List your chores God has prepared for you this week. Praise Him!

**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?