

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.

1. Launchers: Hope. Asking our friends and families about the source of their hope.

- What have you hoped in over your lifetime? Did it deliver?
- What hope drives your life choices and expectations?

2. Worship God for the Wonder of His Creation

Friends, rejoice in the Lord for what we can know of Him through what he has made and what good words His works testify about His power and His tenderness.

Psalms 19:1-4a: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

3. Sermon Reflection:**Isaiah 40:25-31; 49:14-16 Our Sovereign Creator Saves**

Intro: Remember that a prophet was a covenant attorney...

GOD IS GREAT, GOD IS GOD

The Lord is as infinitely attentive as He is almighty in His power.

What does it mean that the LORD is transcendent *and* immanent?

What aspect of God's power do you emphasize?

How can you see a disconnect in your own thinking and practice?

You have power to influence but are inattentive.

Or you are attentive but lack a willingness to develop the influence to effect change.

SELFISH ACCUSATIONS

In pride and unbelief, how do we act like God doesn't care?

How do you turn God's transcendence and immanence into a demand that he do what you want, when you want it and how you want it done?

Why do you doubt God's overarching will or His detailed care?

What about God, who He is and what He does, do you complain about the most?

THE ART OF GOD'S GRACE

Why can you trust the LORD in His saving work?

Scars tell an enduring story (Chambers) testifying to a wound and healing. And Jesus bears His scars eternally as a testimony to His atoning work and healing power

Who has failed you? And how does it help you to know that the LORD, Your Maker & Savior, never will? *We need a hope exchange!*

We question *if the LORD sees us*. But *do you see Him?*

How have you lived as if you're more defined by your scars than you are than by God's redeeming work? An eagle soars effortlessly (eagles vs. striving)

Kingdom Centered Prayer:

YOU CAN PRAY WITH US...

1. Worship the LORD, God Almighty for His power and authority as Creator. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for His infinite holiness, both in time (He is eternal) and space (He is all-present).

2. How do you live complaining as if God does not really regard your needs? Confess your unbelief and pride to Jesus asking Him to forgive you and heal your thinking to see how powerful and loving He is.

3. Give thanks to Jesus for His atoning work (His death) and healing power (His resurrection). Thank Him for being wounded and healed in our place – *and for bearing the scars to testify to our salvation by His grace.*

4. Who do you know that is weary and fainting, no matter the cause? Pray for them asking the LORD to renew them and give them His strength, by His love and grace.

5. Ask the Holy Spirit to work into you His understanding and wisdom. In light of His boundless knowledge, the One who calls all the stars by name and not one is missing, pray for grace to know *HIM*.

4. Mission: Giving credit where credit is due – To Our Sovereign Creator

Friends, think about the week ahead and all the folks you will meet and enjoy.

- How can you encourage your friends and direct them to hope in God Almighty?
- To walk humbly with our God is to give Him credit for what He has done, is doing and will do.
 - What gift of God to you are you most excited to tell your friends about?

5. 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?