

GROWTH GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Growth Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "sharing questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

Our Goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not answer all the questions.

SUPPORT Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

SERVE Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Throughout the quarter it is our hope that you can find and or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP

For our group to be healthy, we need to . . .

1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority (Romans 8:29). *Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep this our focus and stay on topic.*

2. Accept each other (Romans 15:7) – *we will have different preferences*

3. Take care of one another (John 13:34).

When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals, etc.

4. Treat each other with respect (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).

*Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge, or fix – unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing. *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as leader might have to help you. *Be careful of gossip prayers – For example "We need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..." *No put downs*
 *Confidentiality – what is said here, stays here – unless life threatening – may need to seek help*****

5. Keep our commitments to the group (Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).

Please give us a call if you can't make it to Growth Group so we know what's going on if we can pray for you.

Guidelines & Covenant

Dates and Times Our Group will meet _____

**Children: How will your group provide a safe and positive environment for children?
How will you share the work or cost?** _____

Study: We commit that we are all responsible to prepare and participate in our weekly study. We strive to use this opportunity to honestly encourage each other's growth in following Jesus.

Prayer: We commit to pray for each other, in group and apart. *Remember - being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people not to want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group you might want to say something like this - it's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray - let them know you'll talk about this more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray -*

Commitment: We commit to attend together for the next 10 weeks. The commitment to be here every week is key to our groups success. If we cannot come to the meeting, we will call _____.

- Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance*
- Make sure that everyone is with you (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*

Food: How will our group share the responsibility for meals or snacks at our weekly meeting? _____

this is a great way to encourage participation, you may want to make sure your host family does not also have to provide the food.

Have the members sign the group Covenant now if they are ready. If not, they are welcome to wait until the next meeting to sign.

We agree together in Christ to honor this covenant.
(To be decided by each person on or before the third week)

Sign below: