

## HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”



Walk in God's Spirit...  
...live out His love.

### FIRST FIVE MEETINGS OF A NEW HOME GROUP

Once a new Home Group is established, this is the curriculum for the first five meetings of a Home Group. We are building a church – not simply leading a coalition of fragmented small groups, each with its own agenda. Therefore, the philosophy of ministry **MUST** be applied and practiced in every Home Group. The goal is to ensure that each person attending understands, commits to and participates in these five areas of the Home Group ministry. The time-frame will take 5 weeks. Each number below represents a weekly meeting.

- 1. What are Home Groups?**
  - a. ARE's and ARENT's
  - b. Structure of a Home Group Meeting
- 2. Core Values of Home Groups**
- 3. Philosophy of Ministry of Home Groups**
  - a. Leadership Teams
  - b. Apprenticing
  - c. Birthing new Groups
- 4. Responsibility of Every Home Group Member**
  - a. Recruitment/Evangelism
  - b. Disciple-making
  - c. Caring
- 5. Conversational Prayer**

### AFTER THE FIRST FIVE MEETINGS OF A NEW HOME GROUP

Curriculum may be chosen by the Leader in coordination with their group. The curriculum choices made by the Leader must be approved by their Home Group Coach in order to align with God's Word and the church's doctrinal statement.

## **HOME GROUPS**

"...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone."

# **MEETING #1:**

# **WHAT ARE HOME GROUPS?**

## HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

### What are Home Groups?

Everyone needs community. Community is Sharing, Participation, and Transparent Relationships. The goal of Christian community is Transformation toward Christlikeness. To that end, we want to be a part of God’s work in making us a church where every Christian is a minister and where no one stands alone.

A Home Group is a community of 8 to 12 people, where group members encourage one another in the journey of becoming mature followers of Christ through transparent relationships, prayer and study of God’s word. When the group reaches a consistent attendance above 12, it will work toward birthing a new group.

Home Groups are NOT small group Bible studies where curriculum dictates duration, atmosphere and personality of groups. Below is a chart illustrating the differences of three kinds of groups. Although each type of group is valid and needed within the Body of Christ, Home Groups are Transformation-focused Groups.

<b>Truth-Focused Groups</b>	<b>Life-Focused Groups</b>	<b>Transformation-Focused Groups</b>
Know the answers to the <i>questions</i>	Know the answers to the <i>problems</i>	Know the truth about <i>God and me</i>
Focus on information: <i>What does it mean?</i>	Focus on introspection: <i>How do I feel?</i>	Focus on transformation: <i>How am I becoming like Christ?</i>
Reward members for being <i>right</i>	Reward members for being <i>real</i>	Reward members for being <i>honest with God and others</i>
Community is built on principle of <i>agreement</i>	Community built on principle of <i>acceptance</i>	Community is built on principle of <i>transparency</i>
The Goal: Well-informed student	The Goal: Well-understood self	The Goal: Well-ordered heart

### Priorities of Home Groups

1. Develop community and caring amongst adults
2. In the context of community, disciple adults to become disciples of Christ, ultimately disciple-makers for Christ, and some to Home Group leadership.
3. Involve the whole family (children too) in community in regular fellowship events.

## **HOME GROUPS**

"...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone."

# **MEETING #2:**

# **CORE VALUES OF HOME GROUPS**

# HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

## Core Values

### 1. Spirit-Directed Flexibility: to Grow and Adapt to Change (John 5:19)

“Blessed are the flexible, for they will not be bent out of shape.” – Texan proverb

### 2. Self-Disclosure: to Know and Be Known (Acts 2:42-47)

“Where everybody knows your name, and they’re always glad you came.” – Cheers Theme Song.

“True community is more than being together. A person does not develop trust in others simply by being in a group where members study together, pray together, and share a common group leader. Trust involves relatedness. Relatedness is more than a presence although that is the beginning. To relate, one must know, and to know one must work at being open to trust.”<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Care Giving: to Love and Be Loved (John 15:13)

“But if one of you has enough money to live well, and sees a brother or sister in need and refuses to help—how can God’s love be in that person?” (1 John 3:17 NLT)

“Loving requires active listening and thoughtful remembering, especially in a small group relationship... active listening honors others, expresses love, and puts Scripture into action.”<sup>2</sup>

### 4. Humility: To Serve and Be Served (Colossians 3:12)

“Serving others may sometimes go unnoticed. But *not* serving others stands out like a sore thumb.”<sup>3</sup>

“Christlike giving... includes discovering needs, then serving and loving someone who may be unable to give back. This kind of giving creates and atmosphere of humility in a small group.”<sup>4</sup>

### 5. Truth-Telling: To Admonish and Be Admonished (Colossians 3:15-16)

“The ministry of admonishing calls people to change, then provides encouragement and teaching to help them change. It is an expression of genuine love and truth from which there can be no turning.”<sup>5</sup>

“Without admonishing one another, our group life becomes shrouded in pretense, shaped by false assumptions, filled with unmet expectations. Emotions retreat underground, pain is medicated but never relieved, and the relationship we long for becomes just another name on a long list of acquaintances.”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gorman, Julie. *Community that is Christian*. Colorado Springs, CO: Chariot Victor, 2000. page 50.

<sup>2</sup> Donahue, Bill and Russ Robinson. *Building a Church of Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001. page 63.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 64

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 65

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 66

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 68

## HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

### 6. Affirmation: To Celebrate and Be Celebrated (Hebrews 10:24-25)

“We have seen groups really take hold of the practice of celebration. Some put members in the center and speak words of affirmation. Others pause virtually every meeting to honor what God is doing in a life in the group. Groups take photos, paint pictures, write affirming letters, give gifts, and sing praises to make sure that ministry and life are celebrated.”<sup>7</sup>

### 7. Spiritual Leadership: To Train and Be Trained (2 Timothy 2:2)

“It is the responsibility of the church to identify and develop new leaders so that the mission of the Gospel can be accomplished and so that people can be shepherded. Jesus modeled this with the twelve disciples, and Paul exhorted Timothy to do the same (2 Tim. 2:2).”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 70

<sup>8</sup> Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002. Page 67.

## **HOME GROUPS**

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

# **MEETING #3: PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY OF HOME GROUPS**

# HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

## Philosophy of Ministry of Home Groups

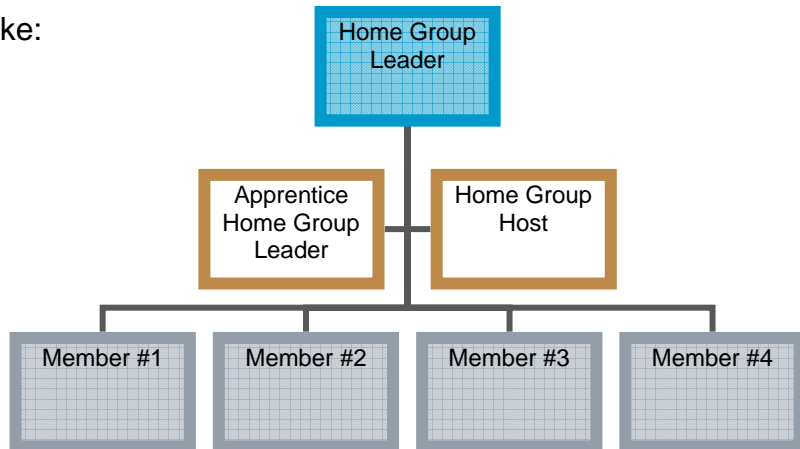
We are building a church – not simply leading a coalition of fragmented small groups, each with its own agenda. Therefore, the philosophy of ministry **MUST** be applied and practiced in every Home Group.

### Leadership Teams

Each Home Group is led by a Leadership Team of three. They are the Home Group Leader (HGL), the Apprentice Home Group Leader (aHGL), and the Home Group Host (HGH).

We believe in the community of the saints (Acts 2:42-47) and the importance of shared leadership. Having a Leadership Team allows individual expression of gifts the Lord has given. It relieves each leader from the stresses and demands of ministry disseminating the workload amongst the team (Gal. 6:2). Finally, shared leadership allows freedom to step down and have the group continue... such as if God leads you down the road to another area of ministry, a geographical move, your family needs you to go on sabbatical, etc.

Here's what the Group will look like:



### Apprenticing

The success of a Home Group largely depends on the ability to reproduce and develop leadership. Since we expect this ministry will grow to meet more needs, then it is vital that we are able to recruit, train and motivate more leaders. Paul said it well to Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:2, “And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.”

The purpose of an Apprentice is to learn how to be a Home Group Leader by participating in group leadership and learning necessary Home Group ministry skills under the supervision of the Home Group Leader and Home Group Coach (2 Timothy 2:2).

Your own Home Group is the place to look for apprentices! These Apprentices are trained to start new Home Groups out of which will come more potential Apprentices. The question of growing is not one of larger groups, but more groups.

# HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

The method of growing is always need driven. In other words, growth occurs because new Leaders are continually needed and recruited. See your Home Group Leader or Apprentice if you're interested in being considered as an Apprentice, otherwise, they might approach you first!

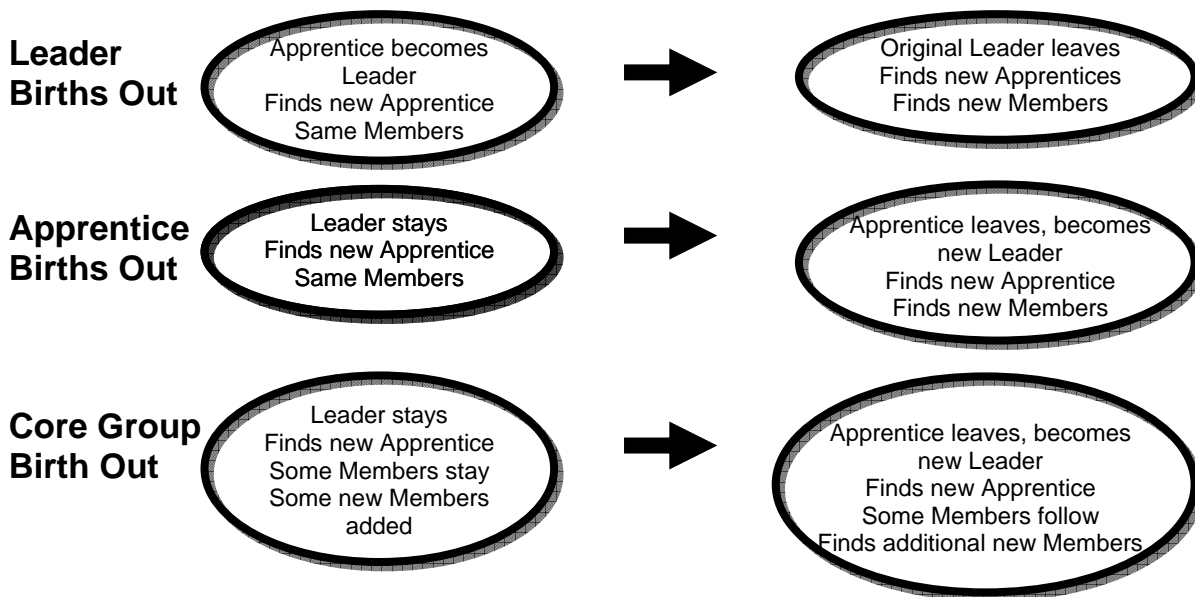
## Birthing New Groups

We are building a church – not simply leading a coalition of fragmented small groups, each with its own agenda. Therefore, the Birthing Process is highly critical to the success and growth of Home Groups in Grace Community Church.

The Birthing Process is as healthy cells grow, they divide and multiply, but since division has a negative connotation within Christian circles, we will call this birthing. If a Group turns ingrown and inward-focused, it will become exclusive, cliquish and unhealthy. When a group births a new one, there remains a relationship of support, celebration and encouragement between the two groups and leaders.

Time to Birth Guideline: Around 12-18 months or when the group reaches a consistent 12 members. However, because this is the first year (2005) of Home Groups, we will need to birth sooner than that based on readiness of the Apprentices to become Leaders and after sufficient time has passed to build community (sharing, participation, and transparent relationships).

Options for how a Home Group may birth<sup>9</sup>:



<sup>9</sup> Donahue, Bill. *Leading Life-Changing Small Groups*. Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI. 2002. Page 168

## **HOME GROUPS**

"...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone."

# **MEETING #4:**

# **RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY HOME GROUP MEMBER**

## **HOME GROUPS**

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

### **Responsibility of Every Home Group Member**

The responsibility every member of the Home Group comes under three categories: Caring, Disciple-making, and Recruitment/Evangelism.

#### **Caring**

Here are 18 ways to care for others in your Home Group. There are many practical applications to these, ranging from mowing another member's lawn, to free babysitting, to watching a member's dog, or even helping them move. There are many ways to truly love another.

“Love one another” – John 13:34-35, Romans 12:10, 13:8; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 4:11

“Honor one another” – Romans 12:10

“Live in harmony with one another” – Romans 12:16; 1 Peter 3:8

“Accept one another” – Romans 15:7

“Instruct one another” – Romans 15:14

“Greet one another” – Romans 16:16

“Agree with one another” – 1 Corinthians 1:10

“Serve one another in love” – Galatians 5:13

“Bear with one another” – Ephesians 4:2

“Be kind and compassionate with one another” – Ephesians 4:32

“Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, spiritual songs” – Ephesians 5:19

“Submit to one another” – Ephesians 5:21

“Forgive one another” – Colossians 3:13

“Teach and admonish one another” – Colossians 3:16

“Encourage one another” – 1 Thess 5:11; Hebrews 3:13

“Spur one another on toward love and good deeds” – Hebrews 10:24

“Offer hospitality to one another” – 1 Peter 4:9

“Clothe yourselves in humility toward one another” – 1 Peter 5:5

#### **Disciple-making**

The Lord Jesus Christ gave the command to His disciples to “Go and Make Disciples.” It is the responsibility of every believer in Christ to reproduce their spiritual growth in the life of another. To grow as a disciple of Christ is to move toward being like Him in every area of our lives, and everyone's role is to grow and to help others grow toward being like Christ. It is when our lives are aligning with the character and will of Christ that we are growing in our discipleship. Now, let's reproduce that in someone else's life!

#### **Recruitment and Evangelism**

It is not solely the job of the Leadership Team to bring new people into the Home Group. Having an empty chair in the Group meetings is a good reminder to pray and ask God to fill that empty chair next week with someone who needs the genuine love of a group of Christians and eternal life from Christ. It is everyone's job to look out for people whom they may like to enfold into the Group.

## **HOME GROUPS**

"...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone."

# **MEETING #5:**

# **CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER**

## HOME GROUPS

“...where every Christian is a disciple-maker and where no one stands alone.”

### CONVERSATIONAL PRAYER

People agree on a specific issue, and that issue, need or concern is saturated and bathed in prayer by a group of people who have a common interest in seeing that prayer need met.

- A. **Awareness:** There is an awareness of the needs, praises, feelings, and cares that are expressed by those in the group.
- B. **Atmosphere:** There is an atmosphere of safety and grace. This is crucial for conversational prayer to be successful. A monologue of prayer doesn't invite participation. If the atmosphere is "communal" then a polite sentence prayer may be agreed with through like-minded participants.
- C. **Teamwork:** Everyone may participate in praying for each subject and need. Conversational prayer is likened to playing volleyball. If the match is to be cordial and pleasant then one ball is served at a time from side-to-side, participant to participant. The ball represents the prayer request, it will travel from one player to the next until the next ball or prayer request is served. In conversational prayer, the group agrees to focus on one subject in prayer until the group has saturated that need in prayer, then another request is presented.

In conversational prayer, one need is saturated in prayer at-a-time by Spirit motivated believers. Picture a deck of cards with each player randomly taking a turn exposing the individual face value of each card. There is no order for which players goes next. The only rule is that each player must comment verbally about the card before the next card is exposed. This is similar to the way in which a prayer request should be treated in a time of conversational prayer!

- D. **Advantages:** There is the advantage of not putting anyone on the spot or making anyone feel inferior by presenting long eloquent prayers. This gives the timid individual a chance to express his/her needs.
- E. **Acceptance:** There is a feeling of acceptance when one's emotional, spiritual, and physical needs are prayed for by two or more people. Members feel cared for when a group of people think enough of a need to bathe and cover it in prayer. The converse may be experienced when a deeply felt need is not given importance in a group conversation a prayer.

Conversational prayer allows freedom and encourages those who are timid or inexperienced in praying (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Isaiah 55:6). Quenching the Holy Spirit may be done during group prayer times. For example, if a pattern is followed by moving from one person to the next in a clockwise fashion, it may be difficult for the Holy Spirit to prompt someone to pray out of turn. While in a prayer setting, has the Holy Spirit moved upon you to pray but by the time your turn came you couldn't remember that wonderful thought? Again, conversational prayer allows freedom and encourages participation by all.