

Community Groups Leadership

Purpose: These groups will strive to build community at Village as they meet during the week to pray, reach out, provide care and study God's Word together.



What is Community? Building real, encouraging godly relationships that spur us to Christ-likeness, ministry, and outreach. (Acts 2:42)

The Four Key Components of Every Community Group:

1. **Outreach** – I encourage you to have an empty chair each meeting to remind people to think about who to invite. This may include people at Village or in their own communities. Some people will come to a home that will never go to the church building. Also, bring up a discussion from time to time of others you could invite as a group.
2. **Community** – Food, food, food, and food. Seriously though, a time of fellowship with snacks and drinks is often where some valuable discipleship and relationships happen. Please get as many people involved in bringing these things as possible. Signup sheets are wonderful!! Some groups plan potlucks and other outings from time to time as well. Community also builds when we share our lives together. Even the “normal” things of life are wonderful to share. Encourage care to happen between all the members.
3. **Spiritual Growth** – A time in God's Word is essential to the success of the group. Growing together in community is powerful. Please read through the study guide beforehand and have preselected several questions. I encourage you to only use the questions as a launching point and use good follow-up questions. We will be digging into the text from Sunday and allowing people to process and apply it.
4. **Ministry / Prayer** – Plan to set aside 15 to 20 minutes for prayer requests and a time of prayer. I prefer a group time of prayer, but some larger groups may want to split into smaller groups of 2 or 3 people to pray. Requests can also lead to times where the group can become the answer to the prayer and care for each other in that way. **These groups should intentionally provide pastoral care to those involved.**

The Four Roles of the Community Group Leader:

Choosing to lead a community group can appear to be a daunting task. We want to help you succeed through support and training. Your primary role is that of a servant shepherd. You lead and care for your group in all 4 areas of Outreach, Community, Spiritual Growth, and Ministry. To better understand how to be a servant shepherd in community groups, it is helpful to break it down to four roles the servant shepherd fills. We will summarize them here and then get into more detail below.

1. **Praying** – This is an intercessory role that is separate from the group's prayer time. We should be praying for those we are shepherding daily. This means we must remember their prayer requests and actually pray for them. Not only are we to be praying for the members of our group, but also that the Holy Spirit would guide and direct our own leadership.
2. **Shepherding** – The role of shepherd involves the aspects of caring, guiding, and reproducing. It is vital that the leader knows and cares for the individual members of the group. Notice when someone is not participating in conversation or has not been there. Be willing to talk and invest in people's lives. The shepherd also guides the group. Someone has to end snack and fellowship time and keep things flowing. In this setting,

that should be done fairly casually, but still done. Also, part of this role is to be reproducing other community group leaders. To do this, we identify those with the gifting to lead and start allowing them opportunities to do so.

3. **Leading** – Your third role is to lead the group time of discussion and prayer. You don't have to be a content expert, but rather be able to ask good questions and use the discussion guide well. As you listen, your follow up questions will be key to engaging the group. It is also important to be sensitive in how we lead a prayer time as this becomes a powerful time of care between group members.
4. **Hosting / Host Home Role** – This role must be filled by the group leader, but also can be shared with a host home. This sharing often creates a wonderful opportunity for another to use their gifts of hospitality while freeing the leader to focus on shepherding. Your objective is to create a warm, inviting place for community group to happen. This most likely includes welcoming, drinks, facilitating snacks, and making sure there are no distractions.

Safe Place: It is vital that the culture of the group is that of a safe place. It is your job to cast this vision. Let people know that what is shared here is just for the ears of those that are here.

1. Choose to be authentic and transparent
1 Pet 2:1 Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.
2. Choose to be vulnerable
3. Choose to be humble
Eph 4:2 Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Letting the Congregation Know: We will have a weekly listing in the Worship Folder and announce the groups from time to time. All Community Groups will also be listed on the web. However, personal invites from both the leader and members are key!

Some Leadership Details:

- The groups will meet on different evenings and times. This will give a better opportunity for people's schedules to fit one of the groups.
 - Please let Sarah Ailes know any changes so she can keep the web page and worship folder up to date.
- We are targeting college and older so that parents feel the freedom to share and have people pray for them. Exceptions will be made at the discretion of the group leader.
- Each group should discuss childcare and how they want to handle this issue. Some may want to rotate a parent watching the kids, or pool resources for a sitter.
- If you have any questions, don't hesitate to ask either by email (to ron@villagebible.com) or comment on the leader's page on the web site.
- Each week, the discussion guide will be posted on the community group leader's web page. The password is "community". This guide is for you to get ideas for questions from! Please let me know what is helpful and what is not helpful. For example, do you need more practical questions or more textual questions? Training materials and documents will also be on the web site.
- Email updates will be sent regularly. Please respond and let us know how things are going and who is showing up.
- Also, the initial signups were just that, "initial." As you look through the signup sheets or talk to people, note anyone that you know is not attending a group. Some will wait for a personal invite

from the leader to attend. Also encourage your group to invite and brainstorm about that. If after several weeks we need to reshuffle, we'll work that out.

- Don't be discouraged with low numbers. Use it as a divine appointment to get to know some specific people better.

Sample Schedule:

- Meet and greet 10-15 minutes
- Bible discussion 45-60+ minutes
- Prayer and sharing of needs 15-30 minutes. This can be done before Bible study as well.
- Snacks and conversation 15-30 minutes

Sample Ground-rules:

- Respect each other even with differences of opinions.
- Confidentiality – this is a safe place to share.
- Pray for each other outside of our meeting.
- What time do you want to start and end?
- How do you want to handle snacks? (beginning or end, signups, etc)
- Others the group comes up with.

First Meeting Hints:

- For the first meeting, the primary goal is community building. Ask questions, let people share about their lives and things others may not know. Even if there is only one new person in the group, this helps them connect and not feel like everyone else knows each other. This is also a great time to pray for each other.
- At your first meeting, please cast some vision as to what these groups are to designed to accomplish. This is a perfect time to go over the 4 purposes that each group should include listed above.
- For the first 3 or 4 weeks, use general opener questions to allow people to get to know each other better.