

## **Session 2**

### *Gather Together*

**In the beginning of the Bible, God states that it is not good for man to be alone. We are created for connection. The Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) existed in perfect community before the creation of the universe. Since we are made in the image of God, community and relationships are at the essence of who we are as human beings.**

**Adam and Eve sinned, and brokenness entered our world. Perfect relationships were broken...with God, with self, with creation, and with one another. The good news is Jesus came to redeem that which was broken. Followers of Jesus are part of the redemptive plan— to restore and make right the wreckage sin produces. We want to help people live out healthy relationships.**

**The simplest and most adaptive form we've found to accomplish the function of relationships is small groups. Jesus used small groups in His earthly ministry as did the earthly church.**

**Fellowship's small groups are where people can BELONG, GROW, and SERVE. We also believe small groups to be a good way to MULTIPLY our influence and reach out to others. Fellowship's mission is to produce and release spiritual leaders... Small group leadership is the primary means to develop spiritual leaders at our church as we belong, grow, serve, and multiply together.**

## Pray

Pray your Discover Fellowship small group will be a place where people can belong, grow, serve, and multiply. Pray that the people of Fellowship will be in healthy relationships and that they be a blessing to our community and the world.

## Discuss

Where was your favorite place to hang out in high school? What made that place special?

## Read

Read this passage aloud:

### **Acts 2:41-47 NIV**

*Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.<sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles.<sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common.<sup>45</sup> They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.<sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,<sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

## **Interact**

This description of the early church is informative and inspiring. What stands out to you from this description of the early church in this passage?

Where do you see Belonging? Growing? Serving?  
Multiplying?

Why do you think it's significant that the believers were "together" rather than going at life/ministry alone?

Have you ever been in a small group? If so, how did being part of a small group help spur you on toward love and good deeds (Hebrews 10:24)?

Turn to page 40 and review some of the frequently asked questions about small groups at Fellowship. What other questions do you have concerning Fellowship's approach to small groups?

How could participating in a small group be beneficial in your walk with Christ?

## **Share**

Give other group members the opportunity to share the story of their life before Christ, how they met Christ, and their life since coming to know Christ. Remember to keep the sharing of stories brief so that everyone will have the opportunity to tell about what God has done for them.

## **Respond**

Close your time together by celebrating what has been shared in your group meeting. This week, have everyone write a prayer request on an index card. Have women trade cards with women, men with men, and commit to pray for that prayer request every day this week. Close your time praying for people to be connected to Christ and to each other.

**Notes:**

## **Small Groups Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Where do community groups meet?**

Community groups most often meet in homes and apartments. Some community groups meet at offices, parks, restaurants, and coffee shops.

### **How often do community groups meet?**

Our recommended cadence is to meet three times and then have a off week. Some groups meet every week and some meet every other week.

### **How many hours does a typical community group last?**

Most groups meet for two hours. The core elements of a community group meeting are relationship building, Bible discussion, and prayer.

### **Are community groups just for couples?**

Community groups are a place to Belong, Grow, Serve, and Multiply. Community groups can be made up of people in varied seasons of life, ages, and marital status, etc.

### **What's the ideal size for a small group?**

The ideal size for a community group is 8-14 people. Less than eight and it can be tough to get momentum. More than 14 can make it tough for everyone to share and feel a part of the group.

### **What do small groups study each semester?**

Our recommended curriculum is the Bible. Most groups follow our sermon series. However, there is freedom to do a topical study as well. We recomend groups study the Bible at least every other semester.

### **Who leads the lesson each week in small group?**

Because we want leaders to be facilitators, this responsibility can easily be spread around the group. The facilitators job is to launch the discussion, guide the conversation, and summarize key points. We recommend that the facilitation of the discussion be shared among group members.

### **How do small groups handle childcare?**

The four most common ways groups handle childcare are:

- *The group hires a sitter to come to the host home. Everyone who has kids pitches in \$5/child to pay the sitter.*
- *If no one in the group has a home that can accommodate adults and children, one home can be the designated as the “childcare-home” and another home/apartment can be the meeting place for the adults.*
- *Everyone gets their own sitter.*
- *Groups set up a rotation where women meet one week, men meet one week, couples meet together one week, and then there is either an off week or a family week. This necessitates childcare only once per month.*

### **How long does a typical community group stay together?**

A community group’s life cycle is often between one-three years. It takes time to form relationships, build trust, and grow together. However, if a group stays together for longer than three years without producing and releasing leaders or bringing in new people, the group can stagnate or become complacent.

### **Once a group is formed, can others be invited to join?**

Inviting others to join is encouraged. New faces bring energy and excitement. It’s good to discuss ahead of time with your group a healthy rhythm of inviting new people to join. Having new people every week can make the group feel chaotic.



## **Is there a difference between a Sunday school class and a community group?**

Here are the main differences between Sunday school and a community group:

- *The leader of a Sunday school class is called a teacher. The leader of a community group is called a leader.*
- *A group of people assembled at Sunday school is called a class. The group assembled at community group is called a group.*
- *Oftentimes the focus of a Sunday school class is acquiring Bible knowledge. The focus of a community group is being a place to belong, grow, serve, and multiply. Additionally, the focus is on life-change.*
- *The goal of a Sunday school teacher is to teach the content well. The goals of a community group leader are facilitation and developing spiritual leaders.*
- *The setting of Sunday school is in a classroom in the church building. The setting for community group is in a home/apartment within the community.*
- *Outreach in Sunday school is often inviting someone to class or doing a service project together. Outreach in a community group can be inviting someone to small group, serving as a group in your neighborhood, etc.*
- *The outcomes of a healthy Sunday school class are increased knowledge of the Bible, spiritual growth, and a sense of community. The outcomes of a healthy small group are community (belong), spiritual growth (grow), outreach (serve), and leadership development (multiply).*

### **How does someone become a community group leader?**

Leaders are most often asked to lead by staff, community group leaders, or members of a community group. Leaders are often recognized for their spiritual maturity, interest in ministering to others, and vision to raise up future leaders.

### **How do new community groups get started?**

Here are the most common ways:

- *Discover – Community groups form out of Discover small groups.*
- *Group multiplication – Groups decide to multiply their group into two or three groups depending on leaders willing to launch new groups.*
- *Two-three couples decide to start a group and invite others to join.*