

SMALL GROUPS PURPOSE & VISION

Purpose: To provide opportunities for authentic Christian fellowship and outreach.

Vision: We envision displays of the greatest love as Christians lay down their lives for their friends. In these smaller settings, we rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. Our prayers for one another will be heartfelt and our service towards one another will be joyfully sacrificial. As we live our lives together, we will bear one another's burdens and care for another's needs. We see groups of Christians serving non-Christians and making known the way of salvation. We see sinners trusting Christ as their only way to heaven and becoming saints that are saved by the grace of God.

TAKING ROOT DOWNWARD AND BEARING FRUIT UPWARD

As a fruit tree gets planted, it must take root before it can bear fruit. At Calvary Crossroads we believe small groups are similar to fruit trees. The groups must be planted. The groups take root as trust builds. As the fruit of the Spirit adorns our lives the purpose of fruitfulness will be realized. 'Be fruitful and multiply' was the original instruction in Eden. Fruitful small groups understand that multiplication is the purpose of the fruit. That goal of multiplication is understood from the outset. When the group multiplies, we rejoice.

The small group ministry at Calvary Crossroads is where Christian fellowship gets real. Oftentimes, when we gather in larger groups, it seems like we're only able to discuss the tip of the iceberg. Smaller groups allow us to dive a bit deeper below the surface in our love for one another.

Care, prayer and share are three things that happen in our small groups. While none of us can commit to caring for every single person in our large church, each of us can commit to caring for the people God puts into our small group. It is good to know that we've got a group of people that will rejoice with us or weep with us at the appropriate times of life. *'If you go down, I'll be there to pick you up. If I go down, I'll be looking to grab onto your hand to help me back up'* is the idea of caring for one another.

TWO STAGES: GROWTH AND DEPTH

We run our small groups in two stages: Depth and Growth. During the **GROWTH** stage, the group is open and newcomers are welcome. We are building trust as we get to know one another. The elements of our time together in the growth stage include 4 W's: Welcome, Worship, Word & Works. Welcome breaks the ice. Worship directs our attention towards God. Word reveals His truth. Works look to reach out to others through service projects and evangelism. Once we've built trust, we can move into the depth stage.

During the **DEPTH** stage, our focus is on deepening our relationship with God and our friendship with one another. The group is now closed as we build upon the trust we've established. We begin working through some accountability questions as men minister to men and women minister to women. The elements of the depth stage include testimony, Bible, prayer, accountability questions and outreach. During this depth stage, aspiring group leaders are given the opportunity to lead the group with the help of a mentor. The aspiring leaders are prepared to lead their own group.

After a season in the depth stage, the group returns to a growth stage. The idea at this point is, 'let's take this good experience that we've had together and share it with others.' The elements return to the 4 W's and group members are encouraged to invite friends to join our group. As the group grows in numbers, the aspiring leaders are eventually able to begin leading their own group as our single group gives birth into two groups each running in the growth stage.

CELEBRATION AND ADDITION

Rather than ongoing registration for small groups, there will be occasional times during the year when people are really encouraged to get connected with a small group. These times will culminate with an evening service that celebrates our small group ministry. At these services one of the small groups will be serving dinner here at the church in a creative way to the rest of the small groups and all of those who are looking to join a small group, as those interested have an opportunity to search out where they might fit best.

Following dinner, we will proceed into the auditorium for an evening of worship, the Word, and a presentation of our small group vision. During this time of worship, the children will be served with their own small group time as they learn what it means to grow in Christ together. Here also, another small group will be ministering to the children.

SUPPORT

Ensuring that sufficient support is in place for everybody involved in the small group ministry is vital. The support structure of our small group ministry involves leaders caring for members, coaches caring for leaders and

pastors caring for coaches. Small group leaders care for the six to ten people in their group. Coaches care for three group leaders. A pastor cares for three to seven coaches. The board of elders cares for the pastors.

The care we provide each other with includes prayer, encouragement, counseling difficult situations and skill training. It's nice to know that we've got someone to turn to when we feel like we're in over our heads. Some areas we provide training in include facilitation, transparency, Bible study, listening, speaking and reaching.

GROWTH STAGE

Welcome—Worship—Word—Works

DEPTH STAGE

Story—Prayer—Questions

Word—Outreach

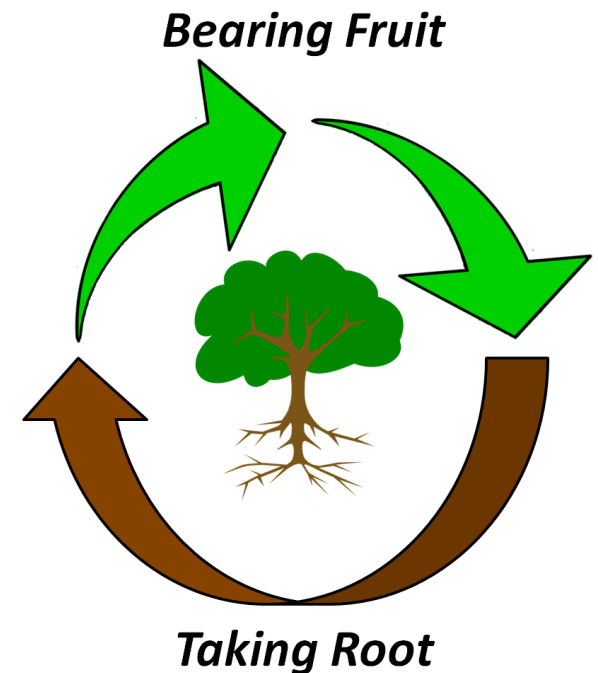
“Love one another as I have loved you.” In our small groups, we seek to do that very thing.

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” In our small groups, we seek to make known who we are by what we do.

“that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.” In our small groups, we seek to make our unity visible in such a way that inspires people to believe that Jesus is the Savior of the world.

This is the small group ministry of Calvary Crossroads that takes root downwards and bears fruit upwards.

Small Groups



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