

What is a Homegroup?

A Homegroup is a subset of the church. Practically speaking, this means each homegroup operates under the church's doctrinal statement, shares and works toward the bigger purpose, core objectives, vision, goals and strategies of the church, recognizes and operates under the church leadership, and works interdependently with the other Homegroups.

A Homegroup is a basic Christian community of 8-20 believers. The Bible gives several important metaphors that help explain what a basic Christian community should look like:

A Family.

A Homegroup is a group where relationships are built; support, encouragement and admonishment are lovingly shared; mature believers help the less mature grow; friends see each other as Christian brothers and sisters and interact regularly—not just at meetings.

A Body.

A Homegroup is a group where every member has an important function! Each member has an opportunity and a responsibility to serve using his/her spiritual gifts, strengths, and resources to build up the others in the group and to help the group fulfill its purpose and vision.

An Army.

A Homegroup is a group that is aggressively pursuing the expansion of God's kingdom! The group therefore has a purpose higher than itself. Evangelism and discipleship are central to this God-given purpose and should be normal activities of the group.

Why Homegroups?

At Fellowship Church, we see Home Groups as vital to fulfilling the purpose and the mission of the church.

The purpose of Fellowship Church is stated as follows:

- **Exalt God** - Eph 5:19-20, Acts 2:46, John 15:1-8, Eph 6:18
- **Encourage Christians To Spiritual Maturity** - Jn 13:34-35, Col 3:12-14, 1:28, 2 Tim 2:2, Rom 12:4-8
- **Equip Christians For Ministry** - Eph 4:11-16, 1 Cor 12:4-31, 1 Tim 3:1-13
- **Evangelize The Lost** - 1 Cor 9:22; Lu 15:1-32, 2 Cor 5:14-21, Acts 8:4, 14:21-23, 1:8

The mission of the church is given in Matthew 28:19-20:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

Our mission then, drawn from the Lord's instruction, is to: (a) "make" mature followers of Christ, "disciples" who "obey everything [Jesus] commands"; and, (b) to make as many disciples as possible, i.e. "of all the nations"

Our desire is to use the gifts, resources and opportunities God has given us for maximum growth!

Home Groups are vital to the fulfillment of this purpose and mission for the following reasons:

Quality Growth:

- 1) We believe for there to be growth in believers' lives there must be an effective one-to-another ministry taking place in the church. That is, believers must be involved intimately with one another to the point of truly loving, bearing with, forgiving, reproving, teaching, encouraging, serving, confessing sins to, praying for, contributing to the needs of ...one another. Our desire is for this one-to-another ministry to be occurring in every single member's life! We see the size (8-20) as important in facilitating this.
- 2) We believe for there to be growth in believers' lives there must be effective pastoral care and equipping. Believers need quality examples, oversight, leading, teaching, guiding, and equipping to grow properly. Although these are the responsibilities of the elders of the church, the Home Group servants greatly assist in personalizing and practically implementing these care and training functions in the life of each and every member of the church.
- 3) We believe that quality relationships glorify God and are essential to healthy Christian growth. Today's society is "disconnected" and impersonal. People tend to be very mobile and private. Home Groups work against these trends by providing a network of close spiritual family members.

Quantity Growth:

- 1) As for numerical growth, we believe God desires all His people to be involved in reaching the lost. Home Groups as a philosophy of ministry de-emphasize "big event" evangelism. Instead, attention is given to providing personal evangelism tools, opportunities, and encouragement for each believer with a stress on every believer being an everyday witness.
- 2) Homegroups are easily reproducible; are an effective model for church planting; are able to reach diverse people groups through various ministry foci; and, are able to handle unlimited growth without sacrificing quality. It is our desire to consistently "multiply" Homegroups on a regular basis in order to reach B/CS and TAMU and to send out church planting teams.

3) Home Groups have an atmosphere conducive to inspiring, recruiting and training ones for short-term mission trips, church plants, full-time ministry, and fulfilling Fellowship Church's "train-and-send" objective.

What Exactly Goes On In A Homegroup?

In answering this question it is very important to keep in mind questions 1 & 2, for although the Home Group may do certain activities, no activity can define what a Home Group is. For example, although a Home Group may study the Bible, a Home Group is not a Bible study. Also, each Home Group is unique just as each family or body is unique. They have different foci, different strengths, different goals. Finally, what goes on in a Home Group depends on the needs of that Home Group at that particular point in time. For example, one semester a Home Group may focus on building relationships within its members and the next semester it may focus on evangelism. Generally speaking, therefore, this is some of what goes on in a Home Group:

A weekly gathering that usually includes: "catching up", prayer for needs, sharing Bible verses and testimonies, topical Bible study, worship, times of accountability, communion, making plans for outreach and fun times.

In addition to this weekly meeting, Homegroups often engage in: Evangelistic outreaches, sharing meals together, weekend fun times, helping to meet one another's needs, accountability, groups service projects, in-depth Bible studies, sports teams, out-of-town trips.

These are some of the group activities that go on in a Homegroup. However, this still only describes a part of what goes on, for the life of the homegroup is the dozens of interactions that regularly happen between individual members each week.

Fellowship Church