

FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

VARIOUS TEXTS

OPENING UP: How have you been blessed by community group or a similar ministry in the past? In what ways have community groups been a help to you in your Christian life? What are you most looking forward to about being back together in community groups?

As groups get started this year, let's take some time to discuss our foundations for community life at Gospel Grace. Read the four main numbered sections below aloud along with the passages associated with them, then discuss the subpoints under each one. *How does each section help guide us as our community group forms? What implications does that have for how we relate to each other? What practices should we give ourselves to as we seek to grow in community as a group?*


- 1 **Community is a unity with God and others that humans were designed for as a byproduct of the image of God in them.** It is not simply having friends with common interests, backgrounds or life choices. (Gen. 1:26, 2:18, John 17:20-23 and 1 Peter 2:9-10)

 What stands out to you in the texts listed about about God's design for relationships with Him and others?


 How does this truth push against some common misconceptions about what a small group is? Think especially of how a group can become simply a bible study, an accountability/prayer/care group, a social club, or primarily inward focused.

- 2 **Community is also God's work in the gospel.** Though God designed humans for healthy relationships with Him and others, that community is broken because of sin. God's design of love and openness was replaced with fear and shame. But, the gospel is God's work to create a new community - a family! - through the process of adoption. (Rom 8:15-16) In adoption, a child cannot separate his or her relationship to a new Father from the relationship to that Father's other children, parents, aunts, uncles, etc. (John 19:26-27, note family language in NT: Rom. 16:1, 1 Pet. 5:12)


 What does Gen. 3:8-12 and 1 John 4:18-20 remind us will inevitably happen as we seek to grow closer with one another in community?

 How does the work of God to create a family through adoption encourage you?

- 3 **Community is our response to the gospel.** If God has made His people a family, they should live like one in authentic love and radical good works both toward each other and toward the world around them -- not to earn God's love, but in response His love. (Rom. 12:9-13, 16-18, Titus 2:11-14)

 What ideas do you have for some ways that we can grow closer as a group this year? What areas of growth do you need prayer for in that?

- 4 **Community is guided by God's good and gracious Word.** Though building community is difficult because of sin, and who we are may be exposed in relationships, we need not fear that exposure, because with every exposure of our sin comes the encouragement from God's word that the persistent work of the Spirit will grow us to be more like Jesus. Sinners who are who both exposed in their need and encouraged in the gospel receive and reflect the love of God to His glory. (Phil. 1:6, John 13:35, Romans 15:5-7) So, in community we fellowship around the word.

 Read Eph. 4:15-16. How does the church grow? How should you be contributing to that growth? Use the imagery in the passage to describe your role in the growth of others in community.

