


FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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, this first study will focus on our foundations for community life at Gospel Grace. Each section includes a truth and an implication. 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 **TRUTH #1 - As humans made in the image of God, we are designed for relationship with God & others. (Gen. 1:26, 2:18, John 17:20-23, 1 Peter 2:9-10)**
IMPLICATION: COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE NOT JUST SOMETHING WE DO AT GOSPEL GRACE. WE WANT THEM TO BE A REFLECTION OF WHO WE ARE.

 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 social club, a bible study, an accountability/prayer/care group, or primarily inward-focused.


- 2 **TRUTH #2 - God's good design was broken because of sin, and love and openness was replaced with the isolation of fear and shame. Some of the first effects of the fall were relational, and we still experience those effects today--both from our own sin and the sin of others. (1 Pet 4:8, 1 John 4:18)**
IMPLICATION: WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT COMMUNITY LIFE IN OUR GROUPS TO BE EASY.


 What are some of the things that make growing closer in community groups difficult?

- 3 **TRUTH #3 - The gospel is God's work to create a new community - a family! - through the process of adoption. (Rom 8:15-16, John 19:26-27)**
IMPLICATION: IF WE ARE A FAMILY, WE SHOULD LIVE LIKE ONE. COMMUNITY GROUPS SHOULD OPERATE WITH A CULTURE OF GRACE WHERE RESTORED RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS ARE FOSTERED.

 Read Romans 15:7, Philippians 2:3-5, Romans 12:9-21. 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 **TRUTH #4 - Though building community is difficult because of sin, and who we are may be exposed in closer 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 to the glory of God. Sinners can admit their need with expectancy. (Phil. 1:6, John 13:35, Luke 1:53, Romans 15:5-7)**
IMPLICATION: COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE A HOPEFUL PURSUIT OF THE LORD TOGETHER THROUGH HIS WORD. THIS IS BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP.

 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.

 Discuss the following: "Jesus died to restore our personal relationship with God. But beyond that personal salvation, Jesus also died to restore our relationships with each other...Considering what Jesus did on the cross for His church, I simply cannot pretend to follow Him without a passionate commitment to building Christian community... In a real sense, the more you love God's people, the more you enter His Story, where His brokenness makes us beautiful, and where His wounds anchor our lives to each other." Stuart Stogner

5 **Out of those four guiding truths and implications, we seek to grow in community at Gospel Grace.** In order to keep those priorities in front of us, we have designed a simple house diagram with four pursuits. In essence, a healthy community group should be spending time in all of these “rooms” on a regular basis.

These 4 pursuits are based on a foundational passage about God’s new community in Acts 2:42-47. Read the text and see if you can discover how the early church devoted themselves to these same pursuits.

Which of these pursuits are you most burdened for our group to grow in? What ideas do you have for growth in each one?

The **DINING ROOM:** we **INSTRUCT** with the Word. The word is the life of community-- our food, so we regularly speak it and share it one with another.

The **LIVING ROOM:** we **CARE** with the Word. The gospel causes us both to care for the needs of those around us and to open up about the needs of our own lives.

The **FRONT PORCH:** we **PROCLAIM** the Word. The front porch is a place where people are both welcomed into a home and where people can be sent out into the world. We proclaim the gospel as individuals and model the gospel in community.

The **WORKSHOP:** we **DISCIPLE** with the Word. In Christian community, believers leverage what they have and who they are to help others become more like Jesus.



6 **Most weeks, our community group discussion time centers around the theme and passage from the previous Sunday.** This week, Pastor Lukus preached the gospel from John 9 on Jesus: the Light of the world. Jesus sees us when no-one else does. Jesus heals us when no-one else can. Jesus loves us when no-one else will.

Discuss how community groups can model and display those same truths of the gospel in a tangible way. (John 15:9-12, 13:35). How can God’s care for people like this help you see, hear, and love others--even those who are forgotten, on the fringe, or helpless?

Jesus sees the blind man immediately after declaring He is the Light of the World. He proves he is the Light by giving light to someone in physical darkness. How can God’s light in your life move you to practically seeing and helping others—what can you do, what will you do?

Have you ever felt like no-one sees you? No-one cares that you are in the room? No-one cares that you are hurting? There are some special places in God’s Word where God sees people no-one else cares to see or no-one else can see. Take some time to think about the following people God sees: Hagar in Gen. 16:15; Nathanael in John 1:48; The Unborn in Psalm 139:16; His “offspring” in Is. 53:10.

PRAYER REQUESTS

7 **How does the story of this man blind from birth provide a parable about the nature of salvation?** How does John’s description of this healing help us understand God’s power in salvation?

How can you view your own experience of salvation through the lens of this story?