



Biblical Community: *Our goal for Community Groups*

An Overview

The mission of Crossroads Church is to serve people toward, and connect people to Jesus. As we connect people to Jesus it is our desire to ultimately connect them to a new way of living, a *lifestyle*, that helps them grow in Jesus and embrace the freedom and hope He has secured for them. We evaluate growth by people discovering who they are in Jesus and developing a passion to help others discover their unique "God design" as well. This isn't unique to Crossroads, but is the basic call to "make disciples" which Jesus gave to every church in Matthew 28:19-20. In fulfilling this, we want to assist EVERYONE at Crossroads Church to *cultivate a lifestyle of personal transformation and being used by God to transform the lives of others.*

Community Groups

Throughout the ages there have been many ways the church has sought to help people grow. Some have created huge events to draw crowds and be transformed by an experience with God (and others). Some have created classes for people to learn the Bible and, therefore, "grow" spiritually as their Bible knowledge increased. Events end and, though the mountain top experience might have been inspiring, events without relationships typically don't bear lasting fruit. Bible Studies are great for content, however it is far too easy to simply academically engage the Bible and not cultivate the intimacy and accountability for true life change.

At Crossroads Church, our key environment for this spiritual transformation are Community Groups. Community Groups are our chosen environment for discipleship, because we believe they allow us to foster "Biblical Community". We believe that Biblical Community has historically been the primary, and most fruitful vehicle for life spiritual transformation. Community Groups are groups of people who are walking life together with a commitment to transformative activities which followers of Jesus have embraced from the early days of the church (Acts 2:44-45; Ephesians 4:15-16; Proverbs 27:17). They live with intentionality toward:

- Allowing God to shape their thinking through engaging His Truth (the Bible)
- Seeking to be changed through applying the Truth of God to everyday activities and lifestyle
- Engaging prayer as a natural activity to connect us to God and His power within everyday life
- Cultivating friendships where people can be honest about the joys and hardships of life
- Caring for one another in tangible ways (moving, hospital visits, meals in times of need, etc..)

- Encouraging each other toward discovering who God uniquely created them to be and how, through that design, God has prepared them to make an impact in their vocation, community, and the expansion of the church.

Though they go by different names in other churches, Community Groups are simply small groups where people can practice the disciplines of Biblical Community with a specific group of people they are walking life with.

Structurally, why do we value Community Groups over classes, events, teaching forums, and other environments?

- Community Groups have the ability to truly foster a sense of “ongoing community”; encouraging people to support each other in the activity of life and faith. They create lifestyle, not just events.
- Within the DNA of a Community Groups, they provide a holistic environment for key needs to be met (biblical content [Bible engagement], biblical application [accountability/life-change], biblical dependence [prayer], biblical vulnerability [care], and biblical lifestyle [spiritual friendships]).
- Community Groups provide “entry points” throughout the year. Built on 10 week cycles, Community Groups allow opportunities for us to promote the value of participation multiple times throughout the year, while still providing consistency for existing group members.
- Community Groups ideally meet in homes, which fosters a natural connection to real life and our desire for the church to ultimately scatter into our communities for impact.
- Community Groups allow us to provide many “types” of groups, to meet specific needs, demographics, days of week, and even locations to create opportunities for all people.
- Community Groups can “weight” their emphasis differently based on the needs and desires of the group, but will all hold the same basic DNA as outlined above.
 - Some may have more of a *fellowship bent*, but we still want them to value and participate in biblical content, biblical application, biblical dependence, as well as biblical lifestyle.
 - Some may have more of a Bible study bent, but we still want them to value and participate in biblical application, biblical dependence, and biblical lifestyle.

How do we evaluate the success of a Community Group?

- When you know that, if you needed a friend at 2AM, your Community Group would be there for you.
- When opening the Bible is more about changing our lives (how we live), than just learning.
- When people are able to “empty their backpack” and all the fears, concerns, and hopes and dreams they carry.
- When someone in your group loves you enough to call out your B.S. or speak God’s truth into your life.
- When you know that you have people in your group who are actively supporting you through prayer and tangibly if needed.
- When you (and others) see that you are more humble, compassionate, and committed to seeing the hope Jesus brings bloom in people’s lives around you than you were a year ago?