

COMMUNITY GROUP STARTER KIT

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

HEBREWS 10:24–25 (NIV)

Highland Park
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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WELCOME

HP Pres Community Group,

We are so excited you have taken the plunge and said “yes” to being in community with others (even if you may still be unsure exactly what that looks like).

This church is not an organization you join; it’s a family to which you belong. In this family it’s OK to not be OK, as none of us is perfect. We want to be a church where no one stands alone or is just a number among the crowd, but a church where everyone has a chance to grow. Our desire is to be winsome followers of Jesus, joining together across generations and cultures to seek the flourishing of our city. With this starter kit, we will guide you through the main values and purpose of Community Groups.

Welcome to the family,
Sterling White



Pastoral Resident

What is a Community Group?

A community group is a place for people to grow in their relationship with Jesus in the context of life-changing community. We believe we were designed for community and are not meant to walk this Christian journey alone (Matthew 18:20).

Why are Community Groups Important?

We believe people experience transformation in their relationship with Jesus more in “circles” than in “rows”. It’s vital for us to participate in corporate worship (“rows”), but we also need smaller groups (“circles”) of Christians to connect with and learn from on how to be a follower of Jesus.

*Read Acts 2:42–27 for an example of what community groups looked like in the early church.

FIRST MEAL TOGETHER

Share A Meal Together

It doesn't have to be fancy. You can order pizza, make burgers, or ask everyone to bring something they love to eat!

Get To Know One Another

- How did you end up at the church?
- Why do you want to be in a community group?
- Have you been in a community group before? If so, what has been your experience with community groups (good, bad, or in between)?
- What are you hoping to get out of this group? (Ex. Build friendships, find Christ-centered support, impact our local neighborhood, grow healthy and godly marriages, or receive encouragement from others in growing in relationship with God)

Decide When And Where You Will Meet

Day of the Week

Frequency

We recommend you meet at least 2x a month.

Every week Every other week Other: _____

Time

Set a start and end time and be sure to respect your end time. We recommend 1.5 hours to 2 hours.

Host

Who is willing to host? Rotate? What is the host responsible for?

Facilitating Discussion

Your group may already have a designated leader. If not, see who would be willing to facilitate the group discussion time.

Point Person

Who will be a point person to text/email the group?

Next Meeting

What is your next meeting date and location?

We recommend you commit to meet six sessions before checking in. Fill out the next six dates on the next page.

COMMUNITY GROUP DATES

This page is to remind you what session we are on and what dates we are meeting.

Initial Meeting _____

Session 1 _____

Session 2 _____

Session 3 _____

Session 4 _____

Session 5 _____

Session 6 _____

Fun Dinner _____

Serving Together _____

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

SESSION 1

TRANSFORMED FOLLOWER

"If you aren't dead then God's not done with you yet."

VALUE #1: GROWTH IS THE GOAL, NOT RIGHT ANSWERS.

Biblical knowledge is not the goal of small group; the goal is to be transformed through Jesus. We get to experience transformation by coming alongside one another, listening, asking questions, and encouraging each other with God's truths (Romans 12:10).

If the goal of small group is growing in your relationship with God in community, then the first step is identifying where you are. Don't be nervous, there are no right or wrong answers. Remember, this is not a place of judgment. None of us are perfect followers of Jesus, we all have room to grow. This process of growth may look different for each person because disciples are handcrafted, not mass produced.

THE GROWTH PATHWAY



REFLECT

1. How would you describe your spiritual growth over the past year? Stalled, stuck, growing?
2. Looking at the Growth Pathway above, which stage do you relate to most? Spend time reading and reflecting on the four stages.
3. What questions or insecurities do the Growth Pathway cause for you?
4. In what areas would you like to grow?

CONNECT

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "training in godliness"?
2. How might it be helpful to compare the Christian life to physical training? (Ex. we create routines with physical training, need self-discipline, there are ups and downs, etc.)

ENGAGE

Read 1 Timothy 4:7-16.

1. Which of these encouragements from Paul to Timothy stand out to you?
2. Why does Paul say we need to pursue "training in godliness"?

APPLY

1. How are you "training" to grow in your life as a disciple of Jesus?
2. How have you grown spiritually in the past year? In what areas would you like to keep growing?
3. Which stage of the growth pathway do you relate to most? Why?

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4. What are some of the benefits and dangers of an exercise like this? Is it hard to be honest?
5. How can we, as a group, help each other grow in our relationship with God?

SHARE YOUR STORY

Spend remaining time briefly sharing what led you to put your trust in Jesus and what that looks like for you now. If you run out of time, set aside time next session to continue sharing stories.

IDEAS FOR THIS WEEK

- Write down a few reflections from small group so you can see how you've grown over the six sessions.
- As you reflect on your first meeting, reach out to others if you have any questions.
- Start a girls' group text and/or a guys' group text. Reach out to the group about grabbing coffee/lunch to get to know each other better.

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Before Community group

Intro

Read introduction and look up cited Scripture

Reflect

Questions to reflect on individually before meeting

During Community group

Intro

Reread introduction

Connect

These are open-ended questions to get your group talking about the themes for this week

Engage

Scripture and questions to take it a step deeper

Apply

Connect the passage to our everyday lives

After Community group

Ideas for This Week

Practical ways to apply the lesson during the week

SESSION 1

Transformed Follower

"If you aren't dead then God's not done with you yet."

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If the goal of community group is growing in your relationship with God in community, then the first step is identifying where you are. Don't be nervous, there are no right or wrong answers. Remember, this is not a place of judgment. None of us are perfect followers of Jesus, we all have room to grow. This process of growth may look different for each person because disciples are handcrafted, not mass produced.

the growth pathway



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2. Looking at the Growth Pathway above, which stage do you relate to most? Spend time reading and reflecting on the four stages:
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Connect

1. What comes to mind when you hear the phrase "training in godliness"?
2. How might it be helpful to compare the Christian life to physical training? (Ex. we create routines with physical training, need self-discipline, there are ups and downs, etc.)

Engage

Read 1 Timothy 4:7–16.

1. Which of these encouragements from Paul to Timothy stand out to you?
2. Why does Paul say we need to pursue "training in godliness"?

Apply

1. How are you "training" to grow in your life as a disciple of Jesus?
2. How have you grown spiritually in the past year? In what areas would you like to keep growing?
3. Which stage of the growth pathway do you relate to most? Why?

4. What are some of the benefits and dangers of an exercise like this? Is it hard to be honest?
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Share Your Story

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SESSION 2

Walk with God

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NIV)

Value #2: Devote daily to a personal relationship with Jesus through being in God's Word.

Before God can work through us, God wants to walk with us. How do we walk with God? By following Jesus. How do we follow Jesus? By spending time with him. God reminds us of this priority through the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). To begin our journey growing in our relationship with Jesus, we start with our own daily walk with Jesus. For many of us, our spiritual disciplines and routines look different, as we have different experiences and backgrounds. What matters most is not where you are right now, but where you are going. The goal is that we are all seeking to grow and be transformed followers of Jesus.

Now remember, a transformed follower of Jesus does not mean a perfect follower of Jesus. But... if you aren't dead, God is not done with you yet. So how do we devote daily to a personal relationship with Jesus? It starts by investing time with God through Scripture and prayer (Session 3).

What is Scripture? Scripture is God's Word. It's not about getting all the way through Scripture, it's about letting Scripture get all the way through you (Joshua 1:8).

What ties the Whole Bible Together?

The whole Bible is all about Jesus (John 5:39). From Genesis to Revelation the Bible is the story of God's mission to rescue and restore us through Jesus. But if you don't know this, the Bible may offend you, confuse you, or crush you.

Reflect

1. Do you read Scripture daily? Why or why not?
2. What do you do first thing in the morning?
3. When you think about reading Scripture daily, what emotions does that cause for you? Excitement, fear, guilt?

Connect

1. In a moment, we are going to talk about how the practice of reading Scripture can help us grow spiritually. Who is someone who has been significant in your spiritual journey?

Engage

Read 2 Timothy 3:14–17.

1. What does Paul say about the source of the Scriptures (v. 16)? Why is that so important?
2. Paul describes the purposes of Scripture in verse 16. How have you experienced these purposes of Scripture in your life?
 - **Teaching:** The primary way that God has made himself known is through his Word and there is no other way to know God apart from his Word. You can't love what you don't know.
 - **Rebuking:** The Bible cuts like a surgeon. It cuts in order to heal.
 - **Correction:** God uses Scripture to show us where we need to change and turn in order that we can be free from the weight of sin and allow us to become more like Jesus. Sin is anything we say or do that displeases God.
 - **Training in righteousness:** When training for anything you are trying to reach a goal. The Bible trains us to be like Jesus.

3. We sometimes claim a high regard for the Bible, but don't actually read or engage with it. Do you resonate with this? What do you think it should look like to live with a high value of God's Word?

Apply

1. What role does Scripture have in your current spiritual practices?
2. What would the next step be to having Scripture be part of your daily walk?
 - Consider making a commitment to read Scripture individually for the next session before community group meets.
 - If you are looking for more to read, read the Scripture text for the sermon series.

Ideas for this Week

- Intentionally set aside time to spend with Jesus on a daily basis. Have a time, place, and plan. If you check your phone first thing in the morning, consider replacing that time with reading Scripture. "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Matthew 6:33).
- Keep a journal of what you're reading and what God is teaching you. Share this with your group, and ask others what God is teaching them.
- Choose a verse to memorize and meditate on as a group. Help keep each other accountable. Memory verse ideas: Joshua 1:8, Hebrews 10:24–25 or Phil 2:1–11.

SESSION 3

Talk with God

“Lord, teach us to pray.” Luke 11:1 (NIV)

Value #3: Devote daily to a personal relationship with Jesus through prayer.

Prayer is how we talk and communicate with God. How incredible is it that we have a God who we can talk with openly and freely? We believe prayer makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of others.

Whether you have talked with God for years or this is your first time, God invites us into prayer. As we grow patient in a life of prayer, something changes in us. Something happens when we choose to consistently take time to talk, listen, and sit with God. Often we become more patient in life, our grip is loosened on nonessentials, and we come to enjoy God more.

As we let go of our own agenda and offer it to God in prayer, our trust in God grows, our peace increases, and we begin to appreciate the gifts in our life. In prayer, we learn to love more deeply, rest more fully, and trust increasingly in the love and sovereignty of God.

Prayer is not only for our sake, but for the sake of others. As we make space to listen to God, we grow in our ability to listen to others.

Reflect

1. What is your experience/background with prayer? Positive/negative?
2. What did prayer look like in your family growing up?

Connect

1. How would you describe your prayer life?
2. If you currently pray, when do you pray and what do you most often pray about?

Engage

Read Matthew 6:5–13.

1. What characterizes the prayers of the “hypocrites”(v. 5) vs. how Jesus instructs his followers to pray (v. 6–8)?
2. How does it change your thinking about prayer remembering that you are a son or daughter coming to your Father?

Apply

1. Talk about a time when God showed up and acted in your life. What did you learn about God from this experience?
2. How could you incorporate prayer and God’s Word into your everyday routine? How do the two things relate?
3. Start this practice of prayer as a group right now. Pray for the group. Ask God to remove any nerves and finish by praying the Lord’s Prayer together (Matthew 6:9–13).

Ideas for this Week

- Dedicate five minutes a day to pray with God.
- Keep a list of things that you are praying for yourself and for others. Share with your community group as God answers those prayers!
- Pick a breath prayer and say it throughout the day. A breath prayer is a one sentence prayer that you are able to say in one breath. An example of a breath prayer is “Lord, have mercy”, “My help comes from the Lord” or “Here I am”.

SESSION 4

It's ok to not be ok

Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." Matthew 9:12 (NIV)

Value #4: Share Real Life and Pursue Deep Friendships.

In Sessions 2 & 3, we talked about being devoted to God (Mark 12:30) through Scripture and prayer. In this session, we will talk about what it looks like to be devoted to others (Mark 12:31). Real community happens when we show others our real selves, not our "ideal selves". This includes struggles, joys, needs, encouragements, big decisions, and answered prayers.

Jesus said that it's not the healthy people who need a doctor, but the sick (Matthew 9:12). The application to your community group is that it's not the perfect people who need community but the broken, the needy, and the imperfect. That's all of us! It means that things can get messy at times. People won't be exactly who you expect or want them to be, like you may not be exactly what someone else is expecting.

When we're practicing real biblical community, we get a firsthand look at the struggles, pitfalls, and challenges that all of us experience in our day-to-day lives. The truth is, God wouldn't have it any other way. So guess what? Your community group time may be messy, but we experience true life when we are fully known and fully loved by others on this journey. God will connect your hearts together so you can move past being frustrated by your differences and fully embrace them by God's grace, accepting one another in the same way that Jesus has accepted you (Romans 15:7).

Three Ways to Practice Deep Friendships in Community groups

1. Relationships > Rigid Schedule

It is important to respect each other's time when sharing and aim to set consistent start and end times (Hebrews 10:24–25), but sometimes life happens and you scrap the lesson that night to listen to someone's burdens/joys out of love (Proverbs 17:17).

2. Community isn't just a weekly meeting

Some of the most significant parts of your group will happen outside of regular meetings. Care for one another and put others' needs above your own. Community groups are the first line of response to needs (Philippians 2:3, 1 Corinthians 12:24-26). Share life together, build intentional, purposeful relationships, and don't compartmentalize community group to one area of your life (Acts 2). If you haven't yet, go ahead and plan a date for something outside of community group time on page 4.

3. Everyone shares

Make sure everyone feels safe and free to participate in the group discussion. Some people will talk more than others, but everyone should get a turn (Proverbs 27:23). Pray for each other every meeting (Phil. 4:6, Colossians 4:2, James 5:16).

Reflect

1. What expectations do you have for community group? Are they idealistic or messy? Why?
2. What has been your excuse for not initiating with people in your group throughout the week?

Connect

1. Describe a time when you felt really loved and accepted by someone (church, family, neighbors, community group, Bible Study table, friends, etc.).

Engage

Read Romans 12:2–5, 9–16.

1. What do you observe about healthy community from verses 2–5?
2. What could lead to unhealthy community?
3. As you look at the commands in verses 9–16, which of them are the most challenging? Which of them are the most counter-cultural (the most radical to the way we normally live with other people)?

Apply

1. Does this passage show any aspects of true community that we are missing within our community group right now?
2. Read this quote from John Ortberg:

“[God] always knows just what each person needs. He had Abraham take a walk, Elijah take a nap, Joshua take a lap, and Adam take the rap. He gave Moses a forty-year time out, he gave David a harp and a dance, and he gave Paul a pen and a scroll. He wrestled with Jacob, argued with Job, whispered to Elijah, warned Cain, and comforted Hagar. He gave Aaron an altar, Miriam a song, Gideon a fleece, Peter a name, and Elisha a mantle. Jesus was stern with the rich young ruler, tender with the woman caught in adultery, patient with the disciples, blistering with the scribes, gentle with the children, and gracious with the thief on the cross. God never grows two people the same way. God is a hand-crafter, not a mass-producer.”

John Ortberg (The Me I Want to Be, pg. 49)

- God’s disciples are hand-crafted not mass produced. Sometimes we forget that we, as a community, are all different in our needs and struggles. At times, we give good advice over God advice. How does this quote help remind us that God provides for his disciples?
3. What are some ways that our community group can make an effort to build relationships and community with each other? What would it look like to really invest in building relationships within this group?

Pray

Last session, we learned the importance of talking with God through prayer. We learned how prayer makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of others. Moving forward, we are adding a “Pray” section at the end of each session. This is a reminder to spend the last 10–15 minutes of community group time sharing prayer requests and praying for each other.

1. Are there specific joys or burdens that we can share with one another?

Ideas for this Week

- Send a text to someone in the group this week (check in, encourage, etc.).
- Think about an event you could coordinate and invite others in the group to join you.
- Build in natural life overlap—go to church together, share a meal, etc.
- Share one thing that you are struggling with in the group that you haven’t yet shared.

SESSION 5

Be Devoted to One Another

“Be devoted to one another in love.” Romans 12:10 (NIV)

Value #5: Be Devoted to One Another and Commit to Living Life Together.

In Acts 2:42–47, we see how the early church began with being devoting to one another by meeting regularly. The disciples were devoted to each other in four ways: in fellowship, sharing a meal together, reading God’s Word (Session 2), and prayer (Session 3). None of this is possible without first committing to meet together regularly.

Schedules, sports, kids, exhaustion, sickness... so many things fighting for our attention and yet, God calls us to live life with other believers and prioritize meeting together. In a culture where it’s easy to opt out, unsubscribe, and unfollow, commitment to one another takes intentionality and discipline. When personalities clash, someone overshadows, or things get awkward, it is easy to lean out rather than lean in. Remember we are all imperfect sinners—including you—who are learning what it looks like to follow Jesus. We experience true life when we lean in to each other and remember what we have in common: Jesus. The goal is not for us all to be the same, but for us to grow and sharpen one another to be more like Jesus (Proverbs 27:17). God created you with unique gifts to be a part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27). As you learn how to live in relationship with the people in your community group, it also teaches you how to live in relationship with God. We need you as part of this group, as part of the church. Your community group is a family to belong to, not a program to attend.

Through regularly meeting, we will begin to see themes of how God is moving in our lives and in the lives of others. Then, a community group becomes a place of encouragement, accountability, and community. A community group is a place to be fully known and fully loved by God and by others. Challenge yourself to opt in and make a commitment to this community group.

Factors Outside Of Community group

Consider some ground rules to help you prioritize community group. For our community group, we decided that there are two reasons to miss:

1. You are traveling and not in the city.
2. You are sick and contagious.

We also had to clarify two questions: What if my spouse is traveling but I’m not? Come to community group! What if some people in the community group cancel, do we still meet? Yes, we still meet. By talking through expectations and laying a foundation, it enables us to plan and prepare accordingly.

Factors Inside Of Community group

One other way we can be fully devoted to one another is by being fully present during community group. We encourage you to check your devices at the door, which means having your devices put away and on “do not disturb.” Bring your physical Bible with you over using the Bible app. With kids, try to find a time after kids’ bedtime to meet or find someone to watch kids to enable you to be fully engaged. Set yourself up to make the most of the time your community group has together.

Reflect

1. What distracts you from prioritizing community group?
2. What are ways you could be more intentional and prepared for community group?
3. What obstacles or fears cause you to not be generous with your time?

Connect

1. Name a group where you have committed for one year. What impact did that group have on your life?
2. What hesitations or fears do you have when making a commitment to being a part of this community group?

Engage

Read Hebrews 10:23–25

1. What does verse 23 say should be the foundation of the community group?
2. What is the encouragement in verse 25? What factors cause your community group to be tempted to not meet?

Apply

1. What gets in the way of community in your life?
2. How would your life change by committing to build Christian community?
3. Decide as a group what reasons are acceptable to miss community group.

Get excited that you have a group that will be with you through the ups and downs!

Pray

1. Are there specific joys or burdens that we can share with one another?

Ideas for this Week

- If you have fears of commitment to your community group, reach out to someone in your group or the church about your concerns.
- Brainstorm ways you can be more present with your community group, free from distractions.
- Pray for your community group and the prayer requests brought up.

SESSION 6

Get in the Game

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”
Matthew 28:19–20 (ESV)

Value #6: Don't be a Spectator, Be “All In” on Mission for Jesus.

Get Off The Couch

My husband is a cross country coach. Once a week, the entire team comes together and trains. They wake up early, encourage each other, work hard, receive instructions, and prepare for the big meet. After putting in hours and weeks of commitment, the day of the big race arrives. At the start of the race everyone is cheering, family is present, and my husband is reminding them of their potential. What if, as the horn goes off, no one leaves the starting line? Actually, no one has even left the team huddle.

Wouldn't that be terrible? All that time and hard work would be put to waste because they never stepped foot on the track.

In the same way, it would be terrible if all the investments we made in each other's growth did not “get us off the couch” in our community groups, so to speak. It may be tempting and feel easier to stay focused inwardly on your community group rather than looking outward, but God calls us to look outside of our own group. If your community group is not yet impacting the way you believe, think, and act outside of community group, something is not working.

Jesus doesn't invite us to be Christians so much as disciples. When Jesus left earth, he gave us a simple mission, “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19–20) and our mission as a church is to make disciples from right in our current context. The danger would be that we become busy with schedules and programs, and we lose sight of the mission. We hang out with each other more and more and never look outside of ourselves. There is this dynamic at play in the Jesus community that you are drawn in so that you can be sent out. As we continue to be “all in” on mission of making disciples, let us continually ask what this looks like for our community group.

Consumer Contending

In a consumer-driven world, it can be hard to move from consuming to contending. Instead of being consumers who are filled over and over again, we must understand a great paradox of Christian life: we cannot continue to be filled up unless we are poured out. What are we supposed to contend for? We need to know what we need to fight for. We fight for our soul, our character, the person God is shaping us into, our church, and for God's mission, that others would know Jesus and be part of his kingdom as it extends into our city and world. We are not called to be “spectators” in the Christian life, but every Christian is meant to be “in the game.” We often assume in organizations that 20% of the people will do 80% of the work (Pareto principle), but this is not the way God designed the church. We are not the church without you and your community group. We need 100% participation from every member of our church family because we believe God wants us to be part of his “all in” vision.

Reflect

1. How comfortable are you with talking about God with others?
2. What, if anything, makes you uncomfortable to talk about God with others (fear, lack of knowledge, etc.)?
3. Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? If not, how can you begin learning what they are? See below under “Ideas for this Week” for a Spiritual Gifts Survey.
4. Is it easy or hard to believe that God has gifted you uniquely to love God and love others?

Connect

1. What experiences of serving others have been most significant to you?
2. What have you learned through serving others?

Engage

Read Romans 12:3–8.

1. We are one body and one church, but we do not all have the same function and gifts. God gifted us each uniquely. Before we jump in, what does verse 5 remind us that we all have in common?
2. Re-read verses 6–8. Spend time talking through each spiritual gift on the basis of what you know from the rest of the Bible. Are there any gifts that are new to you or cause questions? Once you finish discussing, read the definitions below from Tim Keller’s Romans Bible study leader’s guide.
 - **Prophecy:** Preaching and speaking truth according to the Scripture.
 - **Service:** This is the word diakonia, which means “practical service.” People with gifts of service are good at the practical and good at administration.
 - **Teaching:** This is the gift of making truth very clear and understandable. A good teacher may not be a good preacher and vice versa.
 - **Encouragement:** Encouragement is a good translation, but it also includes most of what we would call “counseling,” or support and inspiration. Encouragers do not necessarily have to be trained or formal counselors. They can serve as advisors, supporters, greeters, and welcomers in many ways.
 - **Giving:** People with this gift not only enjoy giving in unusual proportions, but are extremely wise in their gifts and their generosity is spiritually very fruitful.
 - **Leadership:** Leaders are people with the gift of getting people to follow them. They can put a vision before a group and inspire them to get there.
 - **Mercy:** This is a gift of people who are specifically moved to work with the poor, the sick, the weak, the prisoner, the addicted, the elderly, and so on.
3. Which spiritual gift could possibly describe you?

Apply

1. “Every Christian is called into Gospel ministry.” Do you typically think of ministry as something that every Christian does? Is that how you approach your own life?
2. Consider speaking encouragement to others in your group about the gifts you see in them or the ways God is using them to minister to others.
 - This is a time to encourage each other in using the gifts we see in one another to serve and minister. It’s also a time to help one another see ways that we can be used to serve others.
 - We want this conversation to not just be about information. We think transformation occurs when we take steps of faith to live as disciples of Jesus. So use this question as a time to consider how to start (or continue) serving in regular ways inside HP Pres or in the community.
3. In what ways do you feel like God may be calling you to get off the couch and get in the game right now?

Ways to be on mission as a Community group

- Sign up to serve with one of our partners in the city at hppres.org/serve-city
- Host a cookout with neighbors
- Adopt a refugee family as a community group
- Devote time to hang out with a friend who does not believe in God
- Make a goal as a community group to serve once a semester

Pray

- Are there specific joys or burdens that we can share with one another?

Ideas for this Week

- Take a Spiritual Gifts survey (if you haven't already) to continue to explore how God has uniquely gifted you.
 - Google "LifeWay Spiritual Gifts Survey" and a PDF assessment should pop up.
- Share your testimony with a friend or spouse to get comfortable in sharing with others.
- Build relationships with people who don't know Jesus.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Congratulations! You completed the first six meetings with your community group. Our prayer is that these six meetings have helped to lay a foundation for your group in what it looks like to be in God's Word, in prayer, living life together, and on mission for Jesus. But it doesn't stop here, this is just the beginning. Do not be discouraged if it still feels a little awkward in your group. Most groups take several months to get fully comfortable and open with each other. Deep friendships take time. If you haven't yet, plan a shared experience to do as a group outside of your regular meeting time.

As a group, it is time to discuss what is next to study. But first, check in with these three questions:

Look Back

1. Are there any details we need to change moving forward about when we meet, where, how long, or how frequently?
2. Are there any concerns or questions anyone has from the last six sessions?
3. Are there any hopes or expectations that have not been met or talked about (confidentiality, accountability, etc.)?
4. How is the size of the group? If you are able to add to your community group, let us know as there are several people looking to join a community group.

Look Forward

Here are two options:

1. Sermon Discussion Guides: Each week on Tuesday, a Discussion Guide is sent out with Scripture and questions to engage on a deeper level with the Sunday Sermon. Most of our community groups use the sermon discussion guides as their regular curriculum. If you don't already receive the Sermon Discussion Guide, contact sterling.white@hppres.org.
2. If there is a certain topic from this study you would like to dig deeper in (prayer, Scripture, community, etc.) OR if your group has a felt need (parenting, marriage, questions about faith), contact sterling.white@hppres.org and she can send curriculum ideas for that topic that have been helpful in other community groups.

Way to go! Proud of you for making a commitment to live life in community.