



COVENANT GROUP DESCRIPTION

The purpose of a Covenant Group is to make disciples by promoting spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's word.

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

As Christ's disciples, we are called to be in meaningful and life-giving relationships with other believers as we grow spiritually by studying God's word together, praying for one another, and living life together. We believe this type of growth and relationship happens most effectively and deeply when groups of three to six people come together, on a regular basis, to commit to doing these things. Groups of this size allow for people to get to know each other well, speak and ask questions freely, and develop strong friendships.

To that end, the church is beginning a new initiative to support the creation of these types of groups, which have been named Covenant Groups. Covenant is a word found often in the Bible as God makes promises, or commitments, to people such as Abraham, Moses, and King David. In a similar way, we are encouraging people to make a covenant with one another as they pledge to meet as a group, guided by the four essential elements, values, and date/time commitments which are outlined in the covenant accompanying this letter.

A unique aspect of the Covenant Groups strategy is, while the church will be providing materials for groups to use, we will not be directing the formation of the groups as we have in years past. There will be no sign-up sheets or assigned days and times and places to meet. Instead, we intend for groups to form organically and be autonomous as each group will decide leadership, meeting times and dates. That being said, the church will assist in connecting people to groups as needed. Most groups will likely use questions and study guides based on the Narrative Lectionary. However, other resources centered on scripture will also be recommended.



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As Covenant Groups form this fall, we encourage each group to set a date to evaluate how their group is going as they look forward to the future. As the church preaching calendar will be scheduled around the Narrative Lectionary, there is a natural break on November 21 as Thanksgiving approaches. We will ask the groups to consider this as a possible date for evaluation as they fill out the Group Covenant agreement together. In addition, pastors will continue to provide support, guidance, and resources to the groups as needed.



COVENANT GROUPS

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FOUR ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A COVENANT GROUP

Opening Up – Building community in my Covenant Group

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first, this sharing may include planned "sharing questions." But, after the first few weeks it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

Digging In – Growing through God's Word

Each week we will consider a portion of God's Word together according to the plan agreed to by the group. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

Living Out – Taking steps to become a mature disciple of Christ

Each week, we'll talk about how to implement what we have learned in practical steps. The group will encourage each other to follow through.

Looking Up – Talking with God about myself and my Covenant Group

We will commit to praying together as a group for the needs of those in our group.



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COVENANT GROUP VALUES

Safe Environment - To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.

Respect Differences - To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Children - Each group will determine how best to provide child care for their group. The church will not provide child care for these groups.

GROUP COVENANT

Dates: We will meet on _____ nights (or days) for _____ weeks. We will then reevaluate our meeting times.

Time: We will meet for _____ minutes and spend the last 10-15 minutes praying for one another.

Commitment: Growth requires a commitment to attend the group regularly, read the Bible passages prior to the meetings, and pray for one another.

Confidentiality: We will keep anything that is shared within the group. We will avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Signature _____

Date _____