



# COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS STUDY GUIDE

For the week of January 22, 2023

## Welcome To The Winter Quarter of Community Groups!

### GOALS OF THE FIRST MEETING

- Re-connect with existing members and meet new members
- **Cast vision for the quarter with your group as you go over the Covenant form**
- **Clarify your group's direction / expectations / commitments using the Community Group Covenant**
- Briefly discuss the sermon topic (if there is time)
- Pray for the building of relationships and the spiritual growth of the group

### ⇒ Items Needed for the First Meeting

- **Community Group Covenant**– Review this with your group. This is added at the end of this lesson and is also found in the resources of the same link where you submit attendance. <https://groups.planningcenteronline.com/resources>
- Name-tags for in-person groups (print or write them out ahead of time).

### ⇒ Contact Your Group in Advance

- Contact all members one week before the first meeting to welcome them to the group. You can check your roster online to see all the members of your group and their contact information. <https://groups.planningcenteronline.com/groups>
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***HOW WE MEASURE SUCCESS WEEK TO WEEK: Hearing from everyone at every meeting and keeping God's Word at the center.***

**Make sure you leave plenty of time to review the Community Group Covenant with your group.**

- **Welcome & Eat** - Potluck is a great option.
- **Group Sharing** – Discussion Note: You can transition from the “Getting to Know You” section to the “Taking It Home” section.
- **Study Questions Discussion**
- **Go over the Community Group Covenant** – Use the last question in the Leader Guide to Study Questions below to transition into reviewing the Commitment Form.
- Close in prayer.
- Mingle afterward.

## Getting To Know You

**Discussion Note:** Add these questions if you have new people in your group or a completely new group. If it hasn't come up in conversation before the meeting officially starts, have everyone in the group share how long they have been attending STF, if they have been in a Community Group before and their favorite hobby.

**Discussion Tips:** Remember to set time limits to ensure everyone has an opportunity to answer the questions. Possibly use the "Tag— You're It" method to ensure everyone can share. Once one person is finished sharing, they select the next person to share.

One of the great parts of being in a Community Group is getting to know others better. Take a moment to jot down your answers to the questions below and be ready to share with your group.

⇒ Tell us about yourself... *Have fun with this question.*

- Would you rather have all traffic lights you approach be green or never have to stand in line again?
- What would your perfect room look like?
- What are some small things that make your day better?

⇒ As we start the new year, what are one or two things you're looking forward to in 2023? *Great question to have everyone answer.*

⇒ Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching, was there anything you heard for the first time or something that caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

## Going Deeper

1. What do you think or feel when you hear the word “fasting”? Is your response positive or negative? Why do you think that is the case?
2. Have you fasted from anything in the past? If so, what did you learn from the experience? How can you take what you learned into your next fasting experience?
3. Read Matthew 4:1–11 then answer the questions below.

Matthew 4:1-11(New International Version)

**4** Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. **2** After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. **3** The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” **4** Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” **5** Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. **6** “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” **7** Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” **8** Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. **9** “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” **10** Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” **11** Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Is it surprising to you that Jesus fasted? Why or why not?

Jesus’ time in the wilderness was important preparation for the mission God gave him. What does the passage suggest about the connection between fasting and resisting temptation?

Jesus is tempted to indulge his physical needs, manipulate God to his own end, and take a shortcut to power and influence. Are you tempted (in different ways) to do any of those things?

4. What are your greatest concerns about fasting? How can you pray about those concerns? Who can you talk to about them?
5. From what do you need freedom? What kind of fast might benefit you most?

## Taking It Home

Is there anything specific you need prayer for, or is there any other focus you would like to have in order to grow this next quarter? *Use this question as an option if it flows well with your group.*

**Transition Statement to Community Group Covenant:** *"It's great to hear what each of you has said about what you want to get out of your time in our group. One of the great benefits of being in a Community Group is the opportunity to have help from others as we seek to be strategic and intentional about our spiritual growth. The Community Group Covenant is designed to serve as intentional guidelines to help us make the most of our time together."*

*Go over the Community Group Covenant with your group. See below. Use this as a guide to keep your group healthy in communicating and caring for one another each week.*

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** *If you have anyone new in your group and you don't know them, it is recommended to close with your host or one person praying. Next week, the Study Questions will include an introduction to praying in a group, so if you have a new group or a lot of new members, it's suggested that you wait until week two to do any group prayer.*

**Mingle with everyone after the meeting.**

Community Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word. (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24-25). Here's how it will happen:

### SHARE

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

### STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

### SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms, such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another and meeting real needs.

### SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community in which we live (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

## IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY

Looking to serve with your Community Group?

To check out all your options, go to [www.stfchurch.com/missions](http://www.stfchurch.com/missions).

# Prayer Requests

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## **LEADERS GUIDE - COMMUNITY GROUP COVENANT**

*When discussing – use the proactive leadership style – clear direction, yet flexible*

Leaders Ph.#

Hosts Ph.#

*Small groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this Covenant is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.*

### **COMMUNITY GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE**

Community Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

#### **SHARE**

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

#### **STUDY**

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life.

*Our goal is to interact interpersonally on the topic and how we can practically follow Christ, not to answer all the questions.*

#### **SUPPORT**

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as *prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.*

#### **SERVE**

Spiritual Growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

### **FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP**

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

**1. Make spiritual growth our number one priority(Romans8:29).**

*⇒ Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*

**2. Accept one another(Romans15:7). ⇒ We will have different preferences.**

**3. Take care of one another(John13:34).**

*⇒ When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals etc.*

#### 4. Treat each other with respect(Ephesians4:25-5:2).

- ⇒ *Listening to one another, if one's talking let's all listen, nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.*
- ⇒ *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is given when asked for) We are not here to judge or fix – unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.*
- ⇒ *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.*
- ⇒ *Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..."*
- ⇒ *No put-downs.*
- ⇒ *What is said here, stays here – of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*

#### 5. Keep our commitments to the group(Psalm15:1-2,4b).

- ⇒ *Please give us a call if you can't make it to Life Group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

### GUIDELINES & COMMITMENT

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1. **Dates**
2. **Time**
3. **Children**
4. **Study**
5. **Prayer**

We'll meet on \_\_\_\_\_ nights for \_\_\_\_\_ weeks. Our final meeting of this quarter will be on \_\_\_\_\_. *Fill in blanks*

We'll arrive between \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ and begin the meeting at \_\_\_\_\_. We'll spend approximately \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in singing (optional), \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in study/discussion, and \_\_\_\_\_ minutes in prayer/sharing. *Fill in blanks*

Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children. Nursing newborns are welcome provided they are not a distraction to the group!

Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon or an appropriate personal growth topic. Our

goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in everyday life. *Not to answer every question.*

Praying for one another. *You'll go over tips on topical prayer the second week of group. Remember - being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group,*

*you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.*

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## **6. Homework & Attendance**

Joining a Community Group requires a commitment to *attend each week and do the homework ahead of time*. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events—but not much more!

*This commitment is the key to a healthy group.*

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will call \_\_\_\_\_.

⇒ *Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation. (A good group starts with good preparation)*

⇒ *Make sure that everyone is with you. (Do we agree? Is this what we want? Make eye contact, etc.)*

⇒ *Most weeks require 20-30 minutes of homework to prepare for the group study and discussion.*

*Sign-up sheets will be made available beginning next week for each of us to bring a snack or drink to share with the group.*

*Emphasize the importance of a quarterly social and service project. As a leader and host, have 2 or 3 suggestions ready and 2 or 3 potential dates. Choose a date or ask the group to bring their calendars next week. New groups are preferred to have their social by mid-quarter.*

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**7. Desserts**

**8. Social & Service  
Project(s)**

**9. Other**

Signed: