

Small Group Philosophy

Organic | Relational | Intentional

MISSION: Creating open, loving and invitational atmospheres where honest, gospel-centered community can flourish in life-on-life relationships

ORGANIC:

Relationships can't be forced. Our job is to be open, loving and invitational. The dynamic of a group needs room to breath, to grow and to establish it's own unique identity. This can only happen when we leave room for organic conversation to emerge. This means:

- We follow the small group template in a relaxed way leaving room for group led conversation.
- We don't dictate the meeting by creating a teacher/student dynamic.

The small group atmosphere is to work through and discuss sermon content as a group NOT dictate our personal theology - we can present our perspective but present the other perspectives as well!

The point is to **allow people** to work through the difficult questions the sermon might have provoked and further search scripture as a group.

RELATIONAL:

Our hopes are that these groups grow to be much more than simply an organized meeting but a place in which trusted friendships can grow. This means more than a small group, we hope you will 'do-life' with these people. Connect over dinners, date-nights, hobbies and more- outside of your weekly meeting. This is the primary place where the family of God can function as such- to meet needs, pray for one another and walk through difficult seasons together. Small groups are where the rubber meets the road of Christian community. As a leader, these means sometimes you may want to:

- **INVITE** the group as a whole or individuals to fun stuff you're doing outside of your normal meetings.
- Help each other out when able! (create meal-trains, help move, help with projects)
- Try to connect others if you know of shared hobbies or interests.
- Don't demand they 'toe the line' theologically before you will accept and invite in.

This means we are playing the 'long-game' in relationships- which means it's ok they don't see eye to eye on all theological issues. We don't die on secondary theological hills. (See primary Vs. secondary resources)

INTENTIONAL:

We aren't just creating a social club- **we are trying to 'Be the church'**. This means we are intentional about leadership, praying for one another and allowing scripture to inform our meetings.

- In the Small group setting, use the sermon notes to walk through different possible topics to discuss.
- Ask questions to guide the conversation but avoid dominating the conversation or allow it to turn into a group counseling session where everyone tries to 'fix' the problems of others.
- Try to create atmospheres where deeper honesty and accountability can happen. However, Small Groups are not the time for personal accountability, however- they may lead to personal relationships (male-to-male, female-to-female) where higher forms of accountability can be walked out.
- Always end by asking how we can pray for one another, allow for sharing and DO IT! Don't be afraid to lay hands on others and pray right there if appropriate. However, always be sure people are comfortable and want to be prayed for- ASK before you lay hands on people!