


FOUNDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OPENING UP: How have you been blessed by community group or a similar ministry in the past? In what ways have community groups been a help to you in your Christian life? What are you most looking forward to about being back together in community groups?

As groups get started each year, we take the first discussion to focus on the foundations for our community life at Gospel Grace. Each section includes a truth and an implication. Read the four main numbered sections below aloud along with the passages associated with them, then discuss the subpoints under each one. *How does each section help guide us as our community group forms? What implications does that have for how we relate to each other? What practices should we give ourselves to as we seek to grow in community as a group?*


- 1 **TRUTH #1** - As humans made in the image of God, we are designed for relationship with God & others. (Gen. 1:26, 2:18, Ecc. 4:9-12 John 17:20-23)
IMPLICATION: COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE NOT JUST SOMETHING WE DO AT GOSPEL GRACE. WE WANT THEM TO BE A REFLECTION OF WHO WE ARE.

 How do this truth and the accompanying verses push against some common misconceptions about what a small group is? Think especially of how a group can become simply a social club, a bible study, an accountability/prayer/care group, or primarily inward-focused.


- 2 **TRUTH #2** - God's good design was broken because of sin, and love and openness was replaced with the isolation of fear and shame. Some of the first effects of the fall were relational, and we still experience those effects today--both from our own sin and the sin of others. (Genesis 3:7-13, 1 Pet 4:8, 1 John 4:18) **IMPLICATION: WE SHOULDN'T EXPECT COMMUNITY LIFE IN OUR GROUPS TO BE EASY.**


 What are some of the things that make growing closer in community groups difficult? And, why is it good for us to be aware of those things as our group begins?

- 3 **TRUTH #3** - The gospel is God's work to create a new community - a family! - through the process of adoption. (Rom 8:15-16, John 19:26-27)
IMPLICATION: IF WE ARE A FAMILY, WE SHOULD LIVE LIKE ONE. COMMUNITY GROUPS SHOULD OPERATE WITH A CULTURE OF GRACE WHERE RESTORED RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD AND OTHERS ARE FOSTERED.

 Read Romans 15:7, Phil. 2:3-5, Colossians 3:12-14, Romans 12:9-18. What ideas do you have for some ways that we can grow closer as a group this year? What areas of growth do you need prayer for in that?

- 4 **TRUTH #4** - Though building community is difficult because of sin, and who we are may be exposed in closer relationships, we need not fear that exposure, because with every exposure of our sin comes the encouragement from God's word that the persistent work of the Spirit will grow us to be more like Jesus to the glory of God. Sinners can admit their need with expectancy and find God and His word to be enough. (Phil. 1:6, John 13:35, Luke 1:53, Romans 15:5-7) **IMPLICATION: COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE A HOPEFUL PURSUIT OF THE LORD TOGETHER THROUGH HIS WORD. THIS IS BIBLICAL FELLOWSHIP.**

 Read Eph. 4:15-16. How does the church grow? How should you be contributing to that growth? Use the imagery in the passage to describe your role in the growth of others in community.

 Discuss the following: "Jesus died to restore our personal relationship with God. But beyond that personal salvation, Jesus also died to restore our relationships with each other...Considering what Jesus did on the cross for His church, I simply cannot pretend to follow Him without a passionate commitment to building Christian community... In a real sense, the more you love God's people, the more you enter His Story, where His brokenness makes us beautiful, and where His wounds anchor our lives to each other." Stuart Stogner

