

8 Steps to Start a Community Group



Why Community Groups Matter

The Bible consistently talks about how important it is to do life together with other believers. In our social media driven world, we are often more used to interacting through a screen than in real life, but those real life interactions are so key!

Aside from going to church regularly and finding a youth group to belong to, a small group is a pretty key part of your spiritual journey. There is something powerful about learning and praying together, and a community group allows you to do both of those and more.

1. Talk to our Community Group Team (groups@clcfamily.church)

Once you've decided to take the leap, start thinking about how you will find people to come alongside you.

A great first step would be to connect with our staff and/or community group team. CLC has great resources and coaches that would love to partner with you, pray for you, and guide you!

2. Decide the Purpose of the Group and Who it's For

Once you've determined that it's time to start a group, you should decide who should be in your group. Do you want to start a girls-only one? How about a men's group? Is it a group from young families? Do you want to start an intergenerational group? Also, what will be the focus of the group?

Below is a list of different types of community groups:

- Disciple-making groups: Do you want the focus of the group to be about making disciples.
- Connection Groups: for believers and non-believers, persons who want to build in-depth relationships with others
- Service Groups: for believers and non-believers who are serving alongside one another in ministry
- Seeker Groups: groups led by a couple of believers but for non-believers. Groups that spend much time dealing with the issues non-believers are considering before coming to Christ.
- Support/Healing Groups: groups for believers and non-believers that support attendees through personal difficulties

3. Plan Out the Details

Alright, so let's say you have determined that you are going to start a group and you've identified the purpose of the group. Your next step is to figure out the best time to meet, and where - which might mean being creative.

*Could you meet at church and bring (or buy) breakfast to eat together before the church service?

*After church over lunch? (You can always you the sermon discussion notes found here; <https://www.clcfamily.church/community-groups>)

*During a lunch break or early in the morning?

*A weeknight at your house that works well for you and your family?

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It also can be great if you can find a 'Host' home, so you can lead the group, but someone else can handle the details of hosting, putting out snacks etc. Brainstorm with your friends/family and the Community Group Team when the best time to have your group will be.

4. Spread the Word

Now it's time to spread the word! Tell your friends, family, and social groups about your small group and when you will meet. You can connect in person, make a Facebook group or Invite over email, send reminders by text, print out flyers, make announcements through the Facebook CLC Family Message board, place a note in our newsletter, etc....use any and every way to make sure people know what's going on.

5. Something to Talk About

Last, but not least, think about the material you will study and the format. You have a lot of options for material! Some ideas are:

*Study along with the sermon series at your church

*Go through a book of the Bible together

*Study a Christian book recommended by someone you trust

*Use one of the 1000s of awesome Bible Studies found a Right Now Media (connect to the Community Group Team to get access to Right Now Media).

The main elements you want to have are *Bible, *Prayer and *Connecting which happens pretty naturally over prayer and spending time together talking.

6. Snacks!

It's always great to arrange to have a snack (if you're not meeting over a meal), and most people are happy to take a turn to bring a snack one week (don't feel like it's all on your shoulders). Food can help break the ice and give a fun element to the group. Eat and study together, and then take time to really pray together.

7. Prayer

Make sure to carve out time at group and during the week to pray for one another. It's pretty awesome to know people are praying for you during the week. It's also easy to get a prayer thread going on your phone, or starting a secret Facebook group to do that as well. It's really important to emphasize at the start of your group that all prayer requests are confidential (provided it's not about someone getting hurt or hurting themselves), so that people feel open to sharing and being vulnerable.

8. Keep it Simple and Have Fun.

Remember to enjoy yourself; this shouldn't be a really stressful project. If you need help, make sure to ask the Community Group Team, the CLC staff, or someone else in your group to give you a hand. Just know that you're taking an awesome step of obedience by stepping out to lead and to grow with others. Keep things simple and enjoy the ride