

Community Group Intro

Welcome! We are delighted that each of you has chosen to accept the invitation to be in our Community Group. We have a few others we are talking with about joining, but wanted to go ahead and get started.

Tonight we can talk about a lot of things that will be negotiable: how often we meet and where, and whether we eat each time together.

But it's also important that we share the same vision about who we will be in these times we have together and what we hope and pray will happen.

The New Testament in particular is full of examples of how sweet Christian fellowship is. Some of us remember when the word *Koinonia* began to be used to describe what happens when Christians meet and share their lives. *Koinonia* can mean joint participation, communion, sharing and intimacy. It definitely indicates something you don't find without Christ as the center of the conversation. *Koinonia* involves dedication to one another and to the Lord, willingness to set aside our own needs, and to open our hearts to each other with trust, to pray believing prayers for each other.

Koinonia is my vision for our group. It is the deepest need of our hearts beyond and in addition to our relationship with God. It won't happen immediately, it takes work and commitment and time. That's why we've set aside time to be together.

Being vulnerable can be tricky for some of us. It can be difficult for some of us to open up and talk about hard things. I do not believe total transparency is necessary for intimacy. Please share on the level that you are comfortable with, while challenging yourself to trust others enough. For others it is easy to share too much and possibly make their spouse uncomfortable! If you are going to share about your marriage, be sure that is a mutual decision.

Confidentiality is essential. When one of us shares something in the group, we will assume that it is ours to share with whomever we want, not yours to share since we told you. This builds trust and intimacy, and is so important.

We will be having some regular input from Jake McGregor, our new pastor who is over the Community Group ministry. But in addition, we need to start by knowing each other more deeply. Some of us have known each other a long time, others are fairly recent acquaintances. Each time we meet, we'll have a chance to hear from one of us to tell our life story in brief form. So here are the questions we'd like you to use as you talk to us so we cover what we need to.

LifeStory Questions Guidance

*Our goal is to know **you**, not just dates and facts. Use these questions to guide what you share and please keep it to 30-45 minutes.*

~**Briefly** share where you grew up, family, and your church upbringing.

~Give one or two significant factors about your childhood that have affected your adult life.

~How did you come to know Christ and what kinds of changes did that make in your life?

~Tell us about your marriage and what you have learned about yourself through it.

~How did you get into your career? What do you like best about it and what is the hardest part about it?

~Talk about your children and what has that journey been like for you?

~Describe your personality with any personality tests you may have taken. If not, just describe in general.

~Talk a little about your spiritual gifts if you feel you know them. Where are they being used?

~ Describe where you feel you are in your relationship with God right now, are you growing, struggling, coasting? What is having an effect on those things?

~What are you looking for in this group?