

Grace City Church

Community Group Host Guide

Helping Strangers Become Friends. Friends Become Family.

Welcome

Thank you for opening your home, your table, or your favorite gathering place to others.

At Grace City, Community Groups aren't designed to be Bible studies or intensive discipleship groups. They're designed to help people slow down, build friendships, laugh together, pray for one another, and experience the kind of community we see throughout the New Testament.

Our hope is simple:

No one should have to do life alone.

You don't need to be a teacher.

You don't need to have all the answers.

You simply create a space where people feel welcomed, known, and connected.

Why Community Groups?

Following Jesus was never meant to be a solo journey.

Community Groups create space for people to move from being familiar faces on Sunday mornings to becoming genuine friends throughout the week.

Our vision is:

Helping strangers become friends and friends become family.

Sometimes that happens around a dinner table.

Sometimes around a fire pit.

Sometimes over coffee.

Sometimes while playing pickleball or sharing a meal.

Community matters because people matter.

The Role of a Host

Think of yourself less as a teacher and more as a host.

Your primary responsibility is creating an environment where relationships can grow.

You help people:

- Feel welcomed
- Learn names
- Build friendships
- Enjoy time together
- Pray for one another
- Stay connected throughout the week

You're not expected to teach a lesson every week.

You're creating space where people naturally begin caring for one another.

What Makes a Great Community Group?

Great Community Groups are:

- Welcoming
- Relaxed
- Genuine
- Fun
- Hospitable
- Prayerful
- Encouraging

People should leave thinking,

"I found my people."

What Can a Community Group Look Like?

Every group is unique.

Some examples include:

- Dinner Groups
- Backyard Cookouts
- Coffee Groups
- Young Families
- Empty Nesters
- Men's Breakfast
- Women's Brunch
- Game Nights
- Pickleball
- Hiking
- Fishing
- Dessert Nights
- Couples Groups
- Neighborhood Gatherings

The activity matters less than the relationships being built.

A Typical Gathering

There isn't one perfect formula, but here's a simple rhythm:

Connect (20–30 minutes)

Eat together.

Laugh together.

Catch up on life.

Welcome new people.

Conversation (30–45 minutes)

Talk about life.

Discuss Sunday's message.

Read a short passage of Scripture.

Ask a few meaningful questions.

Share what God is teaching you.

Pray (10–15 minutes)

Ask how people are really doing.

Celebrate answered prayers.

Pray for needs.

Pray for one another.

Helpful Conversation Starters

How has your week been?

Where have you seen God at work lately?

What encouraged you from Sunday's message?

How can we pray for you?

What's one thing you're looking forward to?

What's one challenge you're facing?

Hospitality Matters

People may forget what you served.

They'll remember how they felt.

Simple hospitality goes a long way.

Smile.

Introduce people.

Learn names.

Help conversations happen naturally.

Invite people back.

Make room for everyone.

Building Community Outside the Group

Real community happens between gatherings.

Celebrate birthdays.

Attend ball games.

Help someone move.

Take someone a meal.

Send encouragement.

Text someone who missed.

Invite people to lunch after church.

Community grows through everyday moments.

Healthy Expectations

Community Groups are not expected to:

- Teach through books of the Bible
- Replace Sunday worship
- Function as counseling groups
- Have every answer

Community Groups exist to help people connect.

Discipleship Groups help people grow deeper in their faith.

Many people will begin in Community Groups before eventually joining a Discipleship Group.

When Someone Needs More

Sometimes conversations reveal deeper spiritual needs.

When that happens:

Pray.

Encourage.

Walk alongside them.

If appropriate, connect them with:

- A pastor
- A Discipleship Group
- A care ministry
- Biblical counseling resources

You never have to carry those moments alone.

Throughout the Week

Reach out.

Pray.

Celebrate.

Invite.

Encourage.

A quick text can make someone feel remembered.

Community Group Values

Everyone Belongs

People don't have to believe before they belong.

Create space where everyone feels welcomed.

Relationships Over Perfection

The goal isn't hosting the perfect evening.

The goal is helping people feel loved.

Authenticity Wins

Be yourself.

People connect with authenticity, not perfection.

Make Room

Always be looking for the next person who needs community.

Leave an empty chair when possible.

Invite someone new.

Live Sent

Community isn't only for ourselves.

As relationships grow, invite neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and friends to experience genuine Christian community.

Host Checklist

Before gathering:

- ☐ Pray for your group
- ☐ Send a reminder
- ☐ Prepare your space
- ☐ Welcome newcomers

During gathering:

- ☐ Introduce everyone
- ☐ Include quieter people
- ☐ Keep conversation moving
- ☐ End with prayer

After gathering:

- ☐ Thank everyone for coming
 - ☐ Follow up with guests
 - ☐ Reach out to anyone who missed
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Frequently Asked Questions

What if I don't know the answer to a Bible question?

That's okay! You can simply say, "I'm not sure, but let's find out together," or encourage them to talk with a pastor.

Do I have to host in my home?

Not at all. Coffee shops, restaurants, parks, backyards, and community spaces all make great gathering places.

Do we have to meet every week?

No. Most groups meet every other week or monthly, depending on what works best for the group.

Can we just have fun?

Absolutely. Shared experiences often create the strongest friendships. A game night, barbecue, or kayaking trip can be just as meaningful as a structured discussion.

Our Prayer

Jesus,

Thank You for welcoming us into Your family.

Help our Community Groups become places where strangers become friends and friends become family.

May every conversation, every meal, every laugh, and every prayer point people toward the love You've shown us.

Use these gatherings to help people find connection, belonging, and hope.

Amen.