



home groups

LEADER PACKET

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Hebrews 10:2-25

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the home group ministry! Home Groups are such a vital part of who we are as a church and much of our identity as a church centers on our body taking an active role in this more intimate study and fellowship. It is our prayer that, if the Lord does indeed call you to lead a home group, your time and ministry would be fruitful. Even more, we pray that you, as the leader, would experience the power of the Holy Spirit at work each time your group meets together.

Why home groups?

We as believers are not meant to “do life” alone. By God’s design, we are created to walk with each other, grow alongside one another, and to glorify God together. Everyone needs the support and encouragement of other people; everyone needs a true biblical community.

We encourage anyone who considers CCSE their home-church to seriously consider the importance of this type of community in their own life.

Each of our Home Groups represents a segment of our church body who are actively choosing to grow with a biblical community through committing to **doing life together**. Our prayer is that each group, through the power of the Holy Spirit, works as one body to love and serve each other and their local community in unity.

How is this accomplished?

Home Groups are designed to complement our weekend worship services by providing a more intimate setting for people to further study and discuss the weekly teaching. For this reason, the format of our group time is very simple.

- **We keep it Gospel Centered:** All that we do in our home groups is in response to, and because of, the work of God's grace in and through our lives. (1 Corinthians 2:2)
- **We spend time in the Word:** We take time to discuss and process the message from the weekend worship service. As a group, we develop a greater understanding of how we can apply the Word to our life in a practical way. The study of the Word in this context is essentially biblical discipleship. We are following the model that Jesus established in the Gospels with his own intimate group of 12 disciples. Through this close relationship, He opened their understanding to the Scriptures. Within those times of teaching, they learned who Jesus was and how to more closely follow Him, so they themselves could be sent out to disciple others. **Discipleship is a biblical mandate.** Our home groups are designed to build a community that cultivates this principle of disciples becoming disciple makers. (Matthew 28:19-20)
- **We pray for one another:** We do this so that we may minister to one another as we bring their needs before God. Intercessory prayer is an important aspect of the Christian life and helps place emphasis on our caring for one another and seeking the Lord together. (James 5:16)
- **We care for one another:** The work of caring for the church cannot be limited to the pastoral staff alone. The body of Christ is called to share in this work, whether the care is physical, emotional, financial or spiritual. (Ephesians 4:11)
- **We go on mission together:** Jesus came on a mission and gave us a mission. As the church we should live and breathe this mission. (Mark 16:15)

Host Home

It is strongly recommended that the group meets in a home other than the group leader's home. This allows the group leader to focus on leading. It also provides an opportunity for more people to be involved in this ministry.

Requirements for hosts

1. A prospective host must be an active part of Calvary Chapel Southeast for a minimum of six months.
2. A prospective host must have read the expectations of a group host (below)
3. They must understand and support the vision of Calvary Chapel Southeast.
4. Must be approved by Pastors/Elders.

Expectations for hosts

- Provide a comfortable, welcoming meeting place. Set an atmosphere of love and acceptance for all, helping each one to feel at home. Be prepared to help people with the “little things” i.e. where to put their coats, where the bathroom is, etc.
- Support the leader by encouraging interaction within the group. This may be accomplished by the use of seating (circle as opposed to rows) refreshments, etc. It is important to remember, however, that the group leader has the responsibility to make the final decisions.
- Refreshments are encouraged, but they are not required. If your group chooses to have refreshments, don't take all the burden upon yourself. Be creative and set up a system to share this responsibility with the whole group. (i.e. snack sign-up, potluck)
- Set up coffee, tea, refreshments, etc. before the meeting begins. Likewise, wait until guests have left before cleaning up. Keeping these distractions to a minimum will allow you the freedom to fully enjoy the fellowship time.
- Have some extra Bibles on hand to give to any that do not have one and for those who have forgotten theirs. Bibles may be obtained free of charge at the church.
- Child care is up to each group. If you have the space, it is a wonderful ministry. If you want to try it, you can have group members take turns or have

the group pitch in for the cost of hiring a trusted individual to watch the children.

- And most importantly...relax, have fun, and enjoy serving the Lord!

Important questions to consider before accepting this role as host

1. **Have you first counted the cost?** As with anything that is effective, there will be personal sacrifices involved.

- **Does your spouse and family support your role?** Family life is a priority and thus your family should be considered in the decisions you make. They are also making sacrifices. If they are not supportive, you will never be effective.
- **Do you have a genuine love and concern for the Body of Jesus Christ?**
- **Are you mature in the faith?** Have you endured through struggles and hardships and yet been persistent in walking with the Lord?
- **Are you grounded in the Word?** Spending time with God through studying His Word and through prayer is vital to staying grounded.
- **Do you understand and agree with the basic doctrines and philosophy of Calvary Chapel?** This is not meant to be exclusionary, but it is essential that the ministry of the local church be carried by leaders of like mind and vision.
- **Are you willing to be accountable to others?** You will be accountable to the group leader and the church leadership.
- **Are you willing to be patient?** At times in this ministry you will have to display patience toward those that are not easy to love.
- **Are you willing to be an example?** Not of perfection, but of the process of the Holy Spirit working in your life.
- **Is there any hidden sin in your life which must first be dealt with before you feel you should accept this position?**
- **Are you already an active participant within the church?**
- **Do you understand the need and importance of your role?**

The Leader

Home Group leaders are responsible for providing their groups with vision, direction, and support. Leaders are successful when they are personally growing in their intimacy with God and fellowship with other believers. The home group leader is the one who sets the tone for the whole group.

The group leader needs to be in line with the overall philosophy of ministry of this church. Each leader is ultimately a servant to those attending the group. As leaders, you are responsible to pray for, maintain relationships with and care for those under your care. As leaders, you are accepting the role of leading by example. Members of your group will follow where you lead. This is a responsibility that should be taken seriously.

Home groups, like many other church ministries, are a part of the larger body and ministry of CCSE. In order for the church body to function to its capacity, each ministry needs to be supportive of one another. This means taking proactive steps to stay in sync with the church as a whole. This might mean, for example, canceling your meeting on the night of an all church event. Instead of meeting as a home group, encourage your group members to attend that event and participate together. Each week, the group should take time to mention upcoming events and opportunities to be a part of within the church.

Another important function of the home group is to encourage spiritual growth through service within the ministries of the Church. As a leader, you should be seeking to identify the spiritual giftings of your group members and help with getting them plugged into ministries where they can use those giftings to the edification of the body and the glory of God. In this way you will act as an encourager, ensuring they know that they are valued and useful.

A great stepping stone for getting members from your group involved in serving is to ask them to lead a specific aspect of your home group. This can be as simple as maintaining a snack sign up sheet or as complex as communicating updates and prayer requests from and then mailing cards to missionary families.

Developing new home group leaders

In order to continue to allow for the involvement of more people in home groups, additional groups will be formed over time. The best way to do this is through raising up new leaders within existing groups. Group leaders should therefore be looking for group members that they feel can move into the position of also being leaders of their own group. Once identified, these members can begin to be developed into leaders.

The heartbeat of each group

Since each home group is made up of different members with varying spiritual gifts, each is unique. The flow of individual groups will vary based on the makeup of its members and the personality of its leader. Regardless of your particular group dynamic, each leader should be focused on discipleship. Home groups are a place where wonderful growth can happen both on the individual level and on the corporate level. The more intimate nature of a small group encourages the building of strong relationships between brothers and sisters in the Lord, as people encourage and pray for one another.

Group leaders can help facilitate growth by maintaining consistency within the group structure. It is important to ensure that everyone has a voice within discussion and is respectful of one another. Genuine relationships and transparency take time to be established. Leaders should help to set the tone of the group and encourage unity as relationships are forming and trust is being established. Ultimately, leaders should remain focused on the purpose of home groups, namely, to Love God and love one another.

The weekly group meeting

There are 3 main components to the weekly home group:

- Time for Fellowship
- Time for Study
- Time for Prayer

There is not a set order or specific way these three components need to be done. The flow of each home group will be unique to the personality of the individual group. Typically, groups meet for around an hour and a half. This however varies based on the time and day a group meets, whether they share a meal during their group and other unique needs.

As the leader, it is up to you, with the input of the group host, to develop the best format for your group and ensure that all three components are included each week.

Sermon based model

Home groups are intended to focus on taking Biblical teaching and applying that teaching to our lives. It is not merely another event to attend or an additional Bible study, but instead, an opportunity to dig deeper into the Bible together as a group.

The home groups are structured to follow the sermon based model. Within that model, the group study time is a reflection upon and discussion about the sermon that was preached at the proceeding weekend service. The group leader will be responsible for leading the discussion of the sermon by asking questions specifically about the passage/teaching. Discussion questions should focus on how the sermon can be applied to the daily lives of the group. Questions will be provided to the leaders weekly, but leaders are also encouraged to create some of their own questions.

We want to live according to James 1:22, *"But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."* It is here that, as the Spirit leads, your group is able

to work out their personal convictions over this passage together. It is also here that, through confession, repentance and prayer (James 5:16), group members can offer each other accountability and encouragement. (Hebrews 3:12-13).

Discipleship within Home Groups

As a leader, your goal within the group should be the discipleship of those you are leading. You are first and foremost seeking to help each member to grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Secondly, you are seeking to help build healthy relationships between members of your group, encouraging them to care for one another. Thirdly, you are encouraging your group members to fulfill the calling God has for each member of the Body.

This calling is first to be a follower of Christ, live their lives in accordance with his teachings, love one another, evangelize and disciple. Secondly, this calling is to actively use the unique spiritual gifts God has given each member for the edification of the church and the advancement of the Gospel.

Requirements for leaders

1. A prospective leader of a home fellowship group must have been an active part of Calvary Chapel Southeast for a minimum of six months.
2. Every leader must understand and support the vision of Calvary Chapel Southeast. Toward that end we require the prospective leader to read the book, "Calvary Chapel Distinctives".
3. Finally, all leaders of home groups must be approved by the Pastors/Elders.

Expectations for leaders

- The leader will need to seek the Lord as they prepare for their group each week. *Some tips are discussed later in this booklet.*

- The leader will direct the weekly group-time discussion using questions which will help the group to observe, interpret, and apply the scriptural text that was taught from the proceeding weekend service.
- The leader will need to attend a quarterly leaders meeting.
- The leader will need to be aware of the development and growth of the group. It is expected that any major concerns from members in your group will be communicated to the pastoral staff to better assist in their needs.
- The leader must be dependable; leading a home group is a commitment. You should make every effort to ensure that, if for some reason you are not able to be there, there is someone in your absence to care for members and lead the group time.
- The leader will need to be a source of encouragement to keep the members focused and growing in the Lord.

Important questions to consider before accepting this role as leader

- **Have you first counted the cost?** As with anything that is effective, there will be personal sacrifices involved.
- **Does your spouse and family support your role?** Family life is a priority and thus your family should be considered in the decisions you make. They are also making sacrifices. If they are not supportive, you will never be effective.
- **Do you have a genuine love and concern for the Body of Jesus Christ?**
- **Are you mature in the faith?** Have you endured through struggles and hardships and yet been persistent in walking with the Lord?
- **Are you grounded in the Word?** Spending time with God through studying His Word and through prayer is vital to staying grounded.
- **Do you understand and agree with the basic doctrines and philosophy of Calvary Chapel?** This is not meant to be exclusionary, but it is essential that the ministry of the local church be carried by leaders of like mind and vision.
- **Are you willing to be accountable to encourage and strengthen others?**
- **Are you willing to come alongside others and really do life with them?** Sometimes this will be messy and uncomfortable. Sometimes it will be inconvenient.

- **Are you willing to lead by example?** A leader will never be perfect, but should be constantly striving to live more Christ-like.
- **Is there any hidden sin in your life which must first be dealt with before you feel you should accept this position?**
- **Are you already an active participant within the church?**
- **Do you understand the need and importance of your role?**

Tips for facilitating discussion time

We recommended that you listen to the message a couple of times to help you get a good grasp on the study. This will give you a good foundation to work from. You can also look into commentaries for additional insights.

You can visit sites such as blueletterbible.org for further study. On this site you can navigate to the verse for the week, click on the tools tab and click commentaries. Choose someone you feel would have helpful commentary on the book you are preparing a study for. For example, Chuck Smith has sermon notes and a C2000 series for bible study on that site. Another good commentator to study on this site is David Guzik.

Combining prayer, listening to the message and researching some commentaries will produce an excellent and in depth personal study of the text. This will give you a great deal to share with your group. Some leaders might even choose to print their notes/questions or email them to the group in advance. This is one way to help everyone be prepared for the study. All of these tools can help you familiarize yourself enough with the text that you are able to facilitate a discussion easily.

As you get to know your group, you will gain a better understanding of what you need to keep the conversation engaged, on topic and fruitful. Sometimes there are things within that passage that weigh heavy on your heart, let the Holy Spirit guide you on what to talk about. Occasionally, the Holy Spirit may guide you to deviate from the routine. During these times, share what the Spirit has put on your heart.

We are to encourage one another, edify one another and glorify God through our daily lives and even through the struggles. Home Groups are the perfect place to work through these struggles using God's word as an instrument of peace.

