

## COMMUNITY GROUP LAUNCH - Week 1

### WELCOME TO COMMUNITY GROUPS!

At Victory, Community Groups create an environment for relationships to encourage one another to be disciples of Jesus and to make disciples. Community Groups are how we share life together as we grow spiritually. We live out our God given purpose of being and making disciples of Jesus through out all of our lives. Following Jesus and the relationships we have with one another are not intended to only be a once a week encounter in a home. This is where Jesus and real life meet together. We get to do that together in life!

As we 'launch' into this new season of Community Groups, we want to lay a solid foundation as we build a relational environment for us to do life together. Let's remind each other of why we do what we do, what we are doing and how we do it.

### Take a look:

***Matthew 28:18-20:*** *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- What do you see about God's heart and plan?
- What's the vision, mission, and process we have as being a part of at Victory?

### Vision Statement:

Victory is a life-giving church that is reaching the world for Christ one person at a time, with love, grace, and compassion.

### Mission Statement:

Our mission is to "Change Lives With The Truth" through Biblical discipleship.

### The Process:

It is our goal to make biblical disciples according to ***Matthew 4:19:*** *Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.*

- How does being a part of a Community Group help us work towards this vision?
- How does the Community Group and the church body work together toward this vision?

- What do you think your part is?

As a Community Group we are here to encourage one another to grow spiritually – in following Jesus, in being His disciple. We want to encourage each other to grow in loving God --- abiding in Him, trusting Him, responding to Him. We also help each other in loving others --- in our homes, our fellow believers and those who we encounter as we work, live, and play.

### **Take a look at:**

**Matthew 22:34-40:** *Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**Ephesians 4:11-16:** *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. How can we help each other stay focused on growing spiritually, loving God and loving others?
2. How do you want to grow in your relationship with Jesus this coming year? What's your plan?
3. How do you want your family to grow spiritually this coming year?
4. How do you want to grow in making disciples this year?
5. In what ways do you want your Community Group to grow this coming year? What's your part?

### **Pray For One Another**

## COMMUNITY GROUP LAUNCH - Week 2

### WELCOME!

Last week we discussed the purpose of a Community Group – to help each other grow spiritually in the midst of intentional relationships. We also talked about how we are a part of the bigger vision and mission.

This week we will explore the definition of a disciple and talk about our Community Group time and outside of the Community Group.

### DEFINITION OF DISCIPLE:

**Matthew 4:19:** *Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."*

- How would you define being a disciple of Jesus?

At Victory we use Matthew 4:19 to give us a definition of being a disciple of Jesus.

A disciple of Jesus is one who is:

Following Jesus  
Being Changed by Jesus  
On Mission with Jesus

- What does being a disciple of Jesus look like for you personally in your daily life?

When we say 'yes' to Jesus, we are all called to be His disciples. We are saying yes to following, being changed and on mission with Him. We are all included in this - - men, women, married, single, those with kids, those without kids .... We are all called to be disciples and to make disciples of Jesus.

Jesus calls us to follow Him in every area of our lives. Our personal relationship with Him, through God's Spirit, through God's Word and God's people is to impact every sphere of our lives. As we walk together we want to challenge and encourage each other to follow Jesus in the following spheres:

Personal Abiding Relationship with Jesus  
Home/Family  
Church/Fellow Believers  
World – where we live, work and play, neighborhood

### Community GROUP FRAME WORK:

We have set our vision and direction of why we do Community Groups and what we want to happen in the midst of our relationships. During our group time we are building

relationships where we get to both practice being and making disciple of Jesus. Lets talk about details of our time together.

### **INSIDE LIFE GROUP TIME:**

- We will explore God's Word together and have some great discussion time.
- We will help each other apply what God is saying to us and challenge each other to next steps.
- We get to pray for and with one another.
- Community Groups are adult focused and kid friendly. How will we as a group make that happen? (*Leaders and host homes may already have an approach to this. If so, please communicate to the group.*)

***Both men and women are called to be disciples of Jesus.  
We are here for relationships that encourage us to grow spiritually.***

**BREAK OUT GROUP TIME:** Community Groups are a great picture of the whole body of Christ – men, women, different ages and stages. There is great benefit to being together. There is also benefit to growing intentional relationships with fellow Christ follower of the same gender. We want the men in your group, and the women in group to grow together and speak into each others lives. One to two times a month we will do 'break outs' during our Community Group time. Break out groups are the men meeting with men, the women meeting with women. This could be for prayer, or to discuss a couple of the questions or how to apply what was discussed.

We want to help each other be disciples and make disciples, both men and women. Some of us have been gifted with leadership abilities. We want to identify those abilities, and equip people to use them. Our break out times could be a time for developing other leaders.

**CURRICULUM:** We will use an approved disciple-making curriculum that is designed to produce spiritual growth, foster open authentic discussions, and increase our love for God and one another.

***We will get to welcome new people to our group.  
We want to connect unconnected people to God and to relationships with people who love Jesus.  
We want to reach lost people.***

Our Community Group is a place to team with each other in living that out.

- Talk about how to create a welcoming environment.

## **OUTSIDE LIFE GROUP TIME:**

As we follow Jesus and be His people we get to do life together. That takes investing time with each other both inside the Community Group time and outside of group time.

- What are ways we could serve together as a Community Group?
- How can we spend intentional time with each other outside of group time? (Think of fun, shared experiences and ways to invest in each others' spiritual growth.)
- What are some ways we can reach out to people who do not yet follow Jesus?

## **Pray For One Another**

## COMMUNITY GROUP LAUNCH - Week 3

So far we have discussed:

- The purpose of a Community Group – For us to grow spiritually in knowing and loving God and in knowing and loving others. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s Word, and God’s people we seek to have Jesus impact every sphere of our lives.
- How each one of us – men, women, married, single, kids, no kids - are called to both be a disciple of Jesus and make disciples.
- The time spent inside and outside of Community Group.

Today we want to talk about growing relationships in our Community Group, relationships that help each of us grow in abiding with Jesus, loving and serving others and reaching out to those lost. We, also, want to explore our roles and expectations for each other.

### BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR RELATIONSHIPS:

#### Look At:

**Genesis 2:18:** *And the Lord God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”*

**Matthew 22:36-40:** *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**Romans 12:9-16:** *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.*

- What do you discover about what God’s idea of relationship is?
- What is your understanding of relationship?
- How does that impact how we can function as a Community Group?
- What is important to you in relationships?

- What would be key for us to build the kind of relationships God describes in His Word?
- What are ways we can grow our relationships during group time? Outside of group time?

(Interesting thought: Notice how the 10 commandments in Exodus 20 revolve around loving God and loving others. Notice how the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22 is written in the context of relationships.)

## **ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS:**

Let's discuss the roles and expectations we have for each other in our Community Group. We want to be a great team that works together, that does life together, that is unified.

What do you expect from the Community Group leader?

Each group might have an apprentice, a women's break out leader, and/or a men's breakout leader. Talk about their roles and expectations as appropriate.

- What do we expect from our host home? What does the host home expect from us?
- If we are here to grow and mature spiritually, to practice being a disciple of Jesus and making disciples, what role do you as members play?
- What expectations do we have of each other?
- How will we chase after people if they start to stray from the group?
- What ways can we help unconnected people get connected into Community Group or church services?

## **Here are some specifics for roles and expectations:**

### **Leader's Role & Expectations Member's Role & Expectations**

- Disciple someone in the group and help others to be discipled by others in the group
- Facilitate relationship with God and others
- Be a disciple and make disciples
- Practice the essentials elements of: abiding with Christ, reaching the lost, chasing the strays, connecting unconnected people to God and others, intentionally investing in someone for the benefit of spiritual growth, identifying potential leaders. Helping the Community Group work together as a team.
- Lead discussions and ask good questions
- Model honesty and transparency in relationship and discussions.

- Build relationships that extend outside of group time.
- Challenge and resolve conflict

### **Member's Role & Expectations:**

- Commit to being in relationship with God and others - both being a disciple and discipling others.
- Commit to the purpose of the group and participate in the ways it functions.
- Commit to be honest and transparent in relationship and discussions.
- Be a part of practicing essential elements of: abiding with Christ, reaching the lost, chasing the strays, connect unconnected people to God and others, intentionally investing in someone for the benefit of spiritual growth, working with the members of the Community Group like a team
- Build relationships that extend outside of group time.
- Support the leader of the group and their leaders
- Resolve conflict and accept challenge by leaders
- Pursue your gifting and place to serve others

### **Questions to consider on your own:**

- Who will you intentionally pursue building a relationship to go deeper and shares more intimately about life and spiritual growth?
- In your life, who needs to be connected into relationships? (Like Community Group and church)
- Who and where can your group serve together?
- How are you seeking to reach out to someone who does not know Jesus? How can your Community Group help you in reaching them?

### **Pray For One Another**



## COMMUNITY GROUP LAUNCH - Week 4

We have been discovering components to launch our Community Groups. Such as...

- The purpose of Life Groups is for spiritual growth through intentional relationships where we explore Gods Word, and walk with the Holy Spirit as we grow in loving God and loving others in every sphere of our lives.
- Every one of us is called to be a disciple of Jesus; following Him, being changed by Him and joining Him in His mission and making disciples.
- Biblical intentional relationships are vital to being a disciple of Jesus. We build relationships during group time, outside of group time, with the whole group and in same gender groups.

This group time we are going to work through creating safe environments...

### CREATING RELATIONAL ENVIRONMENTS:

#### Take a look at:

**Colossians 3:12-17:** *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

- What stands out to you about how Paul instructed them to interact with one another?
- What do you think the environment would feel like as people treated each other this way?
- What would it take to create that kind of environment in our Community Group?

Let's walk through the guidelines we use in our Community Group. As we go over them think about what the heart behind the guideline is and how it helps us create an environment like we see in Colossians.

### GUIDELINES:

Take the time to go through the guidelines, discussing how each will look in your group.

**SAFE GROUP:** We will strive to create an environment where everyone can be real, open, and honest with their struggles and victories.

**CONFIDENTIALITY:** What is said in the group stays in the group.

**LISTEN:** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond, or what you are going to say next.

**PAUSE:** Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares. Give the person sharing the chance to finish and the group the opportunity to consider what was just shared before responding.

**SILENCE:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.

**NO "CROSS TALK":** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.

**NO FIXING (and no convincing):** We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that part. Give encouragement; speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don't try to solve or fix each other.

**NO RESCUING:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.

**SHARING:** Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.

**BE SELF-AWARE:** Be self-aware of how you are personally effecting the environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication.

**USE "I" STATEMENTS:** It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "us", "we", etc.

**CONFLICT:** We will commit to resolve conflict biblically. When conflict or sin issues between group members arise, we want to make sure that we are honoring God and each other in the way we deal with these issues. The following are a few key Scriptures in this regard (there are many others).

- If someone sins against you (Matthew 18:15-20)
- Restoring someone in sin (Galatians 6:1-5)
- Forgive a sinner (Colossians 3:12-13)

- Reconciling differences (Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 7:1-5)

### **Group Discussion Questions:**

- Why are these guidelines important for us as a group? Think about both as a whole group and when breakout groups happen.
- When we invite new people to our group how are the guidelines helpful?
- How can we create a welcoming environment for each other and for people who will join us?
- What helps our group and our environment show hospitality to each other and others?
- Talk about the importance of restoring relationship when conflict happens.
- What are your tendencies when conflict occurs?
- How can we help each other practice what we see God saying about resolving conflict?

### **Pray For One Another**