

## **Thank you**

Thank you for being here. Thank you for your commitment to God, His Church, and the people in it.

## **Vision**

This is the Lord's Church, but it is also our Church. He puts people in charge of his Church. That said, we get to decide what kind of Church we want to be. If we are doing something that isn't working, we can change it. If we are doing something that is not fun, we can scrap it and start doing something fun.

ANYTHING, other than what God's Word declares, is open to scraping, overhauling, or tweaking.

This is the spirit I want us to have in this room.

I am going to talk openly and honestly about how I feel about Connect Group. I want you to do the same. I want it to be your favorite ministry of all time. If it isn't already, let's change it.

I will lay out the vision for our midweek ministry in a moment, but first let's worship God and invite His presence here with us.

## **Worship**

### **What is it that we seek to do at Connect Group?**

- Grow in relationship with God.
- Grow in relationship with each other.
- Grow in number and multiply.

**There are many ways to do a midweek service. Is CG the best way for us to do a midweek time of ministry? Think about that question...**

**Let's talk about some of the ways churches in our culture do a midweek service.**

- Bible study. People gather at the church to hear the Pastor or some other minister share a sermon or study.
- Classes. People gather at the larger church with enough rooms to facilitate multiple classes covering different

topics. They listen to the teacher. There may be questions or interaction.

- Prayer meeting. People gather at the church to pray.
- Small groups. There are many ways to do small group. You are familiar with how we do it.

WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST GOD HONORING THING FOR US TO DO?

WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST EFFECTIVE MINISTRY MODEL FOR REDEMPTION?

Define effective...

- Makes disciples
  - Grows people in knowledge and relationship with God.
- Connects people into a loving, caring, and honest community.
  - They form friendships. They learn to trust. They walk together.
- Encourages spirituality.
  - A place where people encounter God's presence. Worship & prayer take place.
- Provides an avenue for members to grow into leaders within the body.
- Reaches new people

**There are many ways to do a midweek service. Is CG the best way for us to do a midweek time of ministry? Answer that.**

I feel like small groups is the best way to do this. Do you?

Let's ask it this way...

Is CG a SCARP IT, a OVER HAUL IT, or TWEAK IT situation?

- Small groups, which can be done numerous ways.
  - Open groups or closed groups. Who can attend?
  - Cell groups focus on multiplying.

- Free market groups. Groups form around specific interests and people choose the group they want.
- Sermon based groups. “Let’s talk about the sermon from Sunday.”
- Host groups. The Group leader hosts and sticks in a DVD and lets the media do the ministry.
- House Church. Sunday service in the home.

There are strengths and weaknesses to all these groups.

Have you been a part of any of these various group models? Tell us about it.

What is our model? (CELL GROUP, OPEN GROUP)(We do topical series studies)

I want to open this up for a discussion on where your BUY IN is with CG.

- What is our strength in CG ministry? What are we doing right?
- Is there something we could do differently that you think would increase your excitement?
- Are we missing an opportunity that a change would help us achieve?

5 keys to CG (as I see them)

### **1. Focus.**

We have 3 goals. If we accomplish these 3 goals then we are a great success.

A ministry that loses its focus is in trouble.

Our guidelines help us maintain focus as well. This is why we recite our goals & guidelines every time we gather. Our goals keep us as leaders focused, and our guidelines give us the authority as leaders to keep our groups focused.

### **2. Motivation.**

One of the major reason churches do not do small group ministry is because they are afraid to give someone such power as to lead a group of people in a location other than the church sanctuary. Truth is that there are stories of church splits that started in a small group meeting.

So an important key is motivation. You are a leader because I trust your motivation.

Your motivation is God & people. As leaders we need to sense improper motivations. Let's not hand authority to someone with faulty motivation. Let's reward those that display the proper motivation.

### **3. Replication.**

What if you were on a trip somewhere and got hungry so you pulled into a 'chickfila' to order a hand-breaded crispy golden brown chicken sandwich with 2 pickle slices. How shocked would you be if they the person behind the counter said, "we don't serve that at this location, but we do offer deep dish pizzas."

That would be ridiculous. Every Chickfila is going to hand you a chicken sandwich and say "my pleasure."

We have 2 groups right now. I want them to be replications of each other. If you go to the EAST group it should feel like the WEST group.

We try to make choices based on this question "can this be replicated at other groups?"

That is a major reason why we don't have someone stand and teach or preach a sermon. It is hard to replicate someone's teaching and preaching. We don't build our groups on the personalities of our leaders. Hard to replicate...

We follow the same discussion. We have the same worship songs. We have the same format.

Replication helps us multiply. When people go into a brand new group they need to feel the sameness that comes through replication.

We have these things we are asked to do at CG. We don't ask you to do them simply because Chris Fluitt prefers it this way. It's not like the memo you get from the higher ups at work and you look at it and say "well I guess the big wigs want us to do this now..." as you wad the paper up and throw it away.

We ask our groups to do things the same across the board to help us replicate.

We want a nice atmosphere when people walk in the door. WE WANT MUSIC PLAYING - WE DON'T WANT PEOPLE WALKING INTO AN AWKWARD SILENT ROOM.

Our friendliness needs to be replicated. As leaders we need to model friendliness for our group.

We want every group to have a fun BUT SHORT icebreaker.

We want every group to have worship set up and ready to go. We don't want worship to look like an after thought. We don't want someone to play some obscure song that no-one knows. All of this points to replication.

Our start & ending time needs to be replicated across our groups.

#### **4. People are just people**

There must be a freedom to just be another person at CG.

We challenge for TRANSPARENCY. No one should feel out of place for sharing a struggle or failure... because we all have struggles & failures. It should feel normal. It should feel like people can be themselves.

None of our pastors go by the title pastor at CG. We are just people.

I, as your lead pastor, attend CG. I know a lot of small group ministries that failed because the pastor was never a part of the group. The pastor never took on the "just a normal person here" stance within the community.

I'm not just ceo of hair club for men... I'm also a client.

Remember that commercial. We aren't just leaders of Connect

Group, we are also members. WE answer calls to be transparent. When we do we give people permission to do the same.

## **5. The Life Cycle**

Every Group has a life cycle. This cycle also applies to members.

Getting to know you, Getting to trust you, Getting my buy in, Growth, Multiplication

Know where your group and members are in the cycle.

I believe that CG is essential for our church.

I believe CG can boost and even outgrow our Sunday attendance.

I believe everyone who attends our groups knows 10 people who would love CG but haven't yet heard about it.