

REDEEMER'S FELLOWSHIP
LEADING A COMMUNITY GROUP



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WELCOME

There is no church on the corner of W Harvard Ave. and Lookingglass Rd. Despite the building that rests on the lot, the "Redeemer's Fellowship" emblem, and the wooden cross in the garden, it's not a church. That building cannot lead a soul to salvation. It cannot bind anything on earth or loose anything in heaven, nor can it prevail against the gates of hell. But...(Jas 5:20, Mt 16:18-19)...the Church can.

YOU ARE THE CHURCH

If you are a faith-filled, baptized, Spirit-sealed believer in Jesus Christ, you're the Church. And Jesus Christ appointed you to impact this world for his Kingdom.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

// MATTHEW 5:14-16

The Bible points to the Church as the implement that God will use to reach a lost world with the Gospel of Christ. Throughout the New Testament we see a Church that is meant to hold one another in faithfulness to Jesus; disciples who make disciples.

When you consider leading a Community Group, don't envision recreating a classroom in a living room where people come unload books and study, or a place where you wrestle words out of people who don't want to share their feelings. Envision a small group of God's people—the Church—seeking the power of the Holy Spirit together, combating the presence of sin that is stealing their life away, and entering a world with the only truth that can save it: Jesus is Lord.

That's the Church. This is the ministry of Community Groups.

COMMUNITY ON PURPOSE

Our weekend gatherings serve a purpose, but they can't serve every purpose that is meaningful to our walk with Jesus. Vital to your experience in the body of Christ is your ability to live life with other believers.

GROUPS EXIST TO CREATE COMMUNITY WHERE DISCIPLESHIP HAPPENS

We are relational beings, and Community Groups are custom-made to fill a relational gap that every ministry in the church cannot attend to. Consider Adam's instinctive need in the Garden for another person fit for companionship. God *made* us for community, so we believe that creating intentional relationships with other believers in Christ is responsive to His design.

Yet even this need for relationships is ultimately a means to a greater end. After all, people all around are experiencing community in their workplaces, neighborhoods, and sports teams. What sets Community Groups apart is *Christ's presence* in the relationships. This is our unique trait that is not common to every human relationship.

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

// MATTHEW 18:20

When it comes to Community Groups, finding Jesus among ourselves is the whole purpose for which we gather. This isn't merely to experience him in a mysterious, spiritual sense, but to allow God's Spirit to transform us by the influence and prayer of those who care to see Christ's Kingdom elevated. It starts by our own hearts being shaped after his.

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 10:24-25

THE 6 CORE VALUES OF BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

The New Testament contains 59 passages that offer commands including the words “one another.” Any time this term is used, it is pointing specifically to believers in Jesus. Any of his disciples, then or now, are only called by the name “disciple” because they follow where he leads and obey whatever he commands. Furthermore, you can’t obey a “one another” command by yourself.

At Redeemer’s, we believe that the life of Christians in community is unique in its ability to refine discipleship, and its testimony that it provides to an observing world.

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” // JOHN 13:35

The following values are the framework on which Redeemer’s Community Groups are built. It’s how we know if a group is functional and if our church is succeeding. Here is a concise picture of the 6 Core Values of Biblical Community.¹

¹ These Core Values are expanded in the document CORE VALUES OF COMMUNITY GROUPS at groups.redeemers.org.

DEVOTE DAILY

God has called us into relationship with him, and we are dedicated to seek him every day of our life in prayer and time in Scripture.

PSALM 1:1-3

PURSUE RELATIONALLY

We are dedicated to those in our group, and show them love by being invested in their lives outside of our weekly gathering.

JOHN 13:35

COUNSEL BIBLICALLY

We anchor all of our counsel for others in this: Scripture is the final authority of truth and a capable guide for every decision and trial.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

LIVE AUTHENTICALLY

As broken people in need of a Savior, we transparently seek to be known for who we truly are: sinners forgiven by Jesus.

1 JOHN 1:7

ADMONISH FAITHFULLY

We carry out Christ's appointment to confront sin and restore one another in love, encouragement, and prayer.

1 THESSALONIANS 5:14

ENGAGE MISSIONALLY

Our world's only hope for salvation is Christ, and we dedicate our life to the mission of making the Gospel known to all.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

VALUES OVER METHODS

If *purpose* refers to the reason we're doing what we're doing, then *process* just means how we're getting there. It is easy for Community Groups to get distracted from their purpose by how they pursue their process, to become so focused on methods that they lose sight of values. Let's consider a scenario where values compete with methods.

Community Group Leader : *A member of my group came to me before our gathering vaguely expressing some internal struggles she was having with her spiritual life and asked if we could create time in our group gathering to be a sounding board for some tough decisions.*

This is a scenario a Group Leader might run into. Let's look at two possible responses.

(A) : *I let her know that our time was limited and we wanted to make it through study materials, so it might be best for her to seek someone to share this with one-on-one. This allowed us to have a good discussion about the previous week's sermon regarding our identity in Christ.*

Does this response seem ironic to you? The Group Leader in this scenario is coming from a place of good intentions. She wants to consider everyone else in the group, not just the individual. She wants the individual to pursue one-on-one connection and accountability. Both of these are good things, but there is something she's missed.

What if this happened instead?

(B) : *I decided to cut some of the questions I had planned that night and let her share herself with the group. When some other members recognized that many of her hurt feelings were a result of Satan's lies, they corrected her and reminded her of who God says she is in 2 Corinthians 5, a new creation free from sin. Some other members in our group, seeing that she had gotten isolated, agreed to meet her for lunch later that week to continue as an encouragement and to pray with her. By the time this discussion transpired, it was time to pray and end the group.*

Is it possible to get so busy focusing on who Jesus is and trying to learn how to be like him, that we miss opportunities to actually be like him? The member in this scenario needs just that. She needs people to be Christlike by listening to her, giving her *Biblical Counsel* and *Admonishing her Faithfully*.

Everything costs something and each of these scenarios plays out at the expense of experiencing the other one. Think of this in terms of ROI (return on investment.) ROI determines if the value of what is gained is worth the cost that was paid.

Consider the gains and the costs of the previous scenarios:

	GAINS	COSTS
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protects environment of learning - Spend time studying together - Group is not burdened with problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member persists in isolation - Group is unaware of needs - Member is left to care for own condition
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Member is relieved of spiritual burden - Unity is actively sought - Satan's lies are unraveled by God's Word - Group actively engages a ministry moment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group schedule is interrupted - A study is skipped - Follow-up is required

WE DON'T OUTSOURCE OUR PROBLEMS

Scenario A sees meager gains at the cost of some real spiritual detriment to an individual. Scenario B allows some inconvenience in order to see this individual freed from sin and from the lies of Satan. Both of these outcomes play out in Community Groups all the time, but if a Community Group doesn't step in as Christ's hands and feet in the lives of its members to respond to their distinct spiritual needs, who will?

There are only two reasons scenario A even happens. Either 1) it's easier, or 2) we don't feel we have permission/ability to do anything more.

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.

// 2 TIMOTHY 1:7

Jesus expects us to get our hands dirty with the work of ministry and empowers us to take the necessary steps. The Spirit he gave us is one that has power, that confronts and defeats spiritual strongholds. It has no limitations.

Don't let your process limit God's purpose. Community Groups are diverse. They take some different shapes in what their gatherings look like, or the audience that attends, but our values stay the same. Values are the unifying factor of all Redeemer's Community Groups.

BE A GREAT GROUP LEADER

What makes a group leader great? Is it biblical knowledge? An extrovert's people-skills? A killer recipe for lemon squares to be served at every gathering? These are all fine, but consider what a biblical leader really looks like:

How about willingness? Did you know this is one of the common traits of Bible legends like Abraham, Moses, David, Esther, Gideon, Paul? Each of these were people who didn't even feel ready for their moment when it came. But God tends to equip the called rather than call the equipped. You'd be surprised what he can ready you for through his Spirit, but the journey always starts with the words "send me."

How about service? Jesus' followers fought over being great, but he reminded them that in the Church, leadership looks like service.

on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." // MARK 9:34-35.

Jesus offers very little to those who want to make themselves important, so we don't see leadership as a role for elevating ourselves, but for elevating Christ. We'll leave it to him to exalt us when our time of service on this Earth comes to an end.

How about discipleship? If there is one thing Jesus' disciples did show, it was a willingness to leave it all behind and follow the Master, Jesus. A great Community Group Leader is in their role *because of* their desire to see others walk in discipleship after Jesus, so this has to be a result of their own transformation. You cannot give to another something you do not yourself possess.

QUALITY REPUTATION

Beside all these things, a Community Group Leader fulfills the role of a deacon in the church, as outlined in 1 Timothy 3. Deacons are those who are leading visibly in the church, so here's what Christ expects of their reputation:

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep

truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons.

In the same way, the women are to be worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything.

A deacon must be faithful to his wife² and must manage his children and his household well. ¹³ Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus. // 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-13 (NIV)

Disciples of Jesus are filled with the Spirit and equipped with the Word, so we have a similar position as the apostles did in the sense of being an ambassador of Christ (2 Cor 5:20). Anyone who leads in the church from a position of visibility is expected to exemplify this kind of representative reputation. The reputation of the believer is inherently bound to the reputation of Jesus, so our own Christlikeness elevates the reputation of Christ.

LEADING WITH A LIMP

Even as ones who are held to a higher standard, the power of leadership in the Church is truly found in Christ who is the wellspring of grace. Community Group Leaders, Pastors, Elders, and Apostles all have this in common: we're sinners in need of a Savior! So there's no need to hide your flaws here.

When a Group Leader takes the first step to *Live Authentically* through confession, it creates a safe space for other people to know that this behavior is accepted and expected. It allows you to erase an aura of perfection that you don't deserve and which you can't maintain, that suggests the reason you're in charge is because you have it more "together" than everyone else. Lead with a limp. Let your weakness be seen. If dependence on God and one another is our goal, then weakness is our advantage.

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. // 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9

² We maintain that this passage allows for male and female deacons, and as you see in v.12 the Bible typically reduces its addresses to men even where it intends to refer to both genders.

WHAT WINNING LOOKS LIKE

Do you know how to win in baseball? Of course you do. Score more points than the other team by the end of the 9th inning. Even if you're bad at the sport, you *know* how to win it.

How does a Community Group Leader win in their role?

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. // 2 PETER 1:5-8

This passage pictures a follower of Jesus who looks like Jesus. It's a good depiction of what is happening when we're winning as a church. People are taking tangible strides in faith. Becoming more Christlike. Here, Peter equates these things with being "effective" or "fruitful." A community where discipleship is happening is seeing Christ win in people's lives as they become connected with *Daily Devotion* time, or when their marriage starts to heal through being *Counseled Biblically*, or when someone turns from sin as a result of being *Admonished Faithfully*. Community is capable of bringing Christlikeness out of people.

If you see someone in community take a step deeper in their discipleship, your group just had a win.

REDEFINING "MISSIONS"

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. // MATTHEW 28:19-20

Never mistake "missions" as something that happens exclusively outside your national borders. Every follower of Jesus is called to make disciples, and every acre of this Earth with humans on it is a mission field. So if anyone ever asks you "What does the missions budget look like at your church?" just tell them, "All of it."

Community Groups are where discipleship happens, and all of that discipling taking place should not just add Bible knowledge, nor should it end at assurance in one's own salvation through faith. A healthy group arrives at a place where the disciples who are taking shape in it begin to look outside of themselves and *Engage Missionally* with the world around them. There is no such thing as an "un-sent" Christian, and groups don't need to wait for some all-church campaign or pastoral directive to go forth and make disciples. We've already been given that summons by Jesus.

Most importantly, *Engage Missionally* does not mean that we have to create a group project to serve the homeless (though don't let it stop you from doing that!) but rather that we encourage one another to be mission-minded disciples who see our jobs, schools, teams, commutes, etc. as the mission field where Christ has placed us to share the Gospel.

If someone in your group is sharing the Gospel in their mission field as a lifestyle, your group just had a win.

THE CANON FOR COMMUNITY

The 66 books of the Bible adopted by the early Church (think 4th century) were given the label of "canon." We think of this word synonymously with the idea of "authoritative." Canon is a Greek word meaning "measuring stick." So the books of the Bible are not only authoritative, but have always been thought of as the ruler against which we may hold up other things—philosophies, faith, morals, doubts—and measure whether or not they are really true.

The 6 Core Values are all based on Biblical teachings of the 59 "one another" commands of the New Testament. So they're more than ideas we're testing to see if they work well in groups, they're God's word about life together in Christ. So we can hold up our group life against these values and ask if what we are doing measures up. Groups can be healthy or unhealthy, successful or failing, and Scripture is what helps us define this. It is knowable. If you're ever wondering if your group is healthy, look through those values and see if they exemplify the kind of life you are living out together.

If your group is living out the 6 Core Values of Biblical Community, your group is healthy, biblical, and should get used to wins. You'll see a lot of them!

HOW WE EQUIP LEADERS

We value equipping leaders at Redeemer's, because we want all leaders in the church to operate from a place of confidence and purpose. We employ the following elements at Redeemer's Fellowship to equip and align our Community Group Leaders.

CGLT

Community Group Leader Training are hosted just 4 times a year, and provides a gathering place for leaders to interface with one another, and to receive instruction from the pastors of Redeemer's Fellowship. The emphasis in these gatherings is to do only the things that we can do when we are together in person, and are meant to refuel group leaders with vision and allow them to hear from peers who can give a frame of reference for what is happening in other Community Groups. These gatherings are 90-120 minutes long.

Also intermittent between these gatherings, there will be video sessions released (CGLTV) that are purposed towards instructing in specific practices such as how to best construct prayer time in your group or how to use church benevolence to meet needs of your members who are hurting. These videos are 10-20 minutes long.

COACHES³

Community Group Coaches each have a team of 5 Community Group Leaders under them. A Coaching role does what you might expect by name. They help the leader play the game well; the coach doesn't play it for them. Coaches serve leaders as a sounding board for issues that have come up in the Group, assist when there is a need for church discipline, and generally act as an encourager who roots for and prays for the Leaders they care for.

Through Coaches, we want Community Group Leaders to experience the assurance that they are not alone, left to figure out what in the world their Group even exists to do. While one pastor may be unable to be available to 50 Community Groups, a team of Coaches will assure that every Group Leader has a voice and can find the direction they need when they need it.

³ As of September 2018, the coaching model is still in a construction phase at Redeemer's.

DIGITAL RESOURCES

The best resources for leading your Community Group can be found at the Leader's Hub when you visit groups.redeemers.org. Here you will always find resources for the important elements of your Community Group gatherings. While curriculum is occasionally provided here for specific endeavors like our annual membership commitment in January, Group Leaders are encouraged to select their own design and/or curriculum for their Community Group, and several resources like RightNow Media and Driving It Home are included in the links at the Hub to allow you to select something that fits your groups's needs.

Pastor Kory's blog at wherediscipleshiphappens.com is another excellent resource for Community Group leaders. This blog was created with hopes of equipping any churches who are forming Small Groups ministries, and to outfit leaders like you with tools to succeed in the ministry where God has called you and surrounded you with people to shepherd in their life together.

SHEPHERDING THE CHURCH

At Redeemer's Fellowship, Community Groups are the way we shepherd this church. The reason we want to equip you well as a Leader is because you're called to serve Christ by playing your part of shepherding this church body.

REDEEMER'S LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

JESUS CHRIST: The head of the Church. (Col 1:18)

ELDERS: These are the wise and godly men that have been tested and selected to watch over our church. (Titus 1:5; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

LEAD PASTOR: This pastor, who is also an elder, is responsible for the visionary leadership of our church.

PASTORS: A group of men and women who exist to advance the mission of Christ through leadership of the significant branches of ministry in our church.

COMMUNITY GROUP COACHES: Those who assist the Pastor of Community Groups to serve Group Leaders, assuring every one of them is equipped with the tools to lead well and aligned to a biblical purpose in their role.

COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS: If you want to know what Group Leaders are, you're reading the right document.

CHURCH MEMBERS: The hands and feet of Jesus in this world!

This image ought to show a Community Group Leader two things: 1) You're not alone. There are people here on the same mission as you, many of them watching over you to ensure that you are helped and cared for. 2) You're part of something bigger than you. You're serving Jesus, and every level of Redeemer's structure acts as one body part that is connected to the same head. That means we've all got one leader, one purpose, and that the church has always played a sacred role in Christ's work in this world.

Let's look at some of the significant biblical themes where community is pictured by Christ as being a major player, and consider a Community Group's role:

SIN, CONFESSION, REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS

It's your sins that have cut you off from God.

Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

// ISAIAH 59:2 (NLT)

The nature of sin is that which separates us from God. Sin is entirely selfish and cannot allow us to come selflessly to God while we cling to it. It also cannot allow us to *Live Authentically* in community while we hide or harbor it. In fact, community is *exactly* the place where Christ intends for sin to become known.

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

// JAMES 5:16

Confession is not a Catholics-only practice. It's a Christian ordinance exemplified and administered by disciples of Jesus. Scripture points not to clergy as those who hear confession, but rather the members of the Church (one another). This allows us a forum to *Admonish Faithfully* and to encourage each other through prayer. Confession is the first step in someone turning from their sin in repentance.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

While it is our duty in the church to revere the admonishment of our community, not everyone takes reproof well. Fortunately, Jesus has pointed out a distinct method which we use in the church to correct believers who have confessed or been caught in willful sin. When a Community Group encounters this kind of sin, the Leader needs to step up. Here's where the process begins.

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. // Matthew 18:15-17

Jesus lays out three steps, each one offering the offending party a chance to repent.

1) **One v. one** - Respect privacy and come to your brother in Christ to remind them of what they have confessed in the covenant of their baptism, that they are alive in Christ and dead to sin.

2) **Few v. one** - Build a case by the accountability of those who can look with wisdom and love for their brother and vouch for the claim of repentance you have already brought to him.

3) **All v. one** - Take the case to the pastors or elders of the church. This is the final stage of the process and the highest authority of the local church. If a brother refuses to turn from sin after this, the most loving thing to do is to sever them from community so that they cannot endure under a delusion that they are not endangering their soul, compromising their community, and tarnishing the name of Christ.

Only in rare cases of, say, physical endangerment does this exclude the offender from being able to even attend our church. Our hope for anyone who is disfellowshipped is that their isolation would create repentance.

For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. // 2 CORINTHIANS 7:10

The Community Group Leader plays a shepherding role in this process where it involves only their circle of community, but the leaders of the church are there to defend the name of Christ, provide support for the Leader, and to carry out action as a result of admonishment. Group Leaders do not have to and must not carry the burden of church discipline alone.

CARE MINISTRY

People in community care for each other. Where needs arise, be it health, finance, new babies, death in the family, the church (you!) needs to intervene. Physical needs are a portion of the responsibility we carry for one another. Community Groups should take their sick members soup. They should help cover a heating bill when someone has a tough month. They should be the place we turn when the only help we know how to seek is prayer.

There's no simple formula here, just look creatively towards the needs of others with the knowledge that God puts community in our lives to become the tangible presence of our Heavenly Father. Often, community *is* the answer to prayer.

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

// JAMES 2:14-17

THE GOSPEL

Every Christian should know and be able to briefly tell the story of the Gospel. This is especially true of leaders at any level in the church. Because the Gospel is the source of all our hope, our mission, our discipleship, it becomes necessary that we fully grasp this message, that it may provide a life-giving heartbeat to every ministry of the Church.

Here is the Gospel Message:

Genesis 1:27-28	In the beginning, man was made to be in communion with God.
Romans 5:12	Sin entered that relationship through man and severed us from our Creator.
Romans 3:23	Unless my own sins are dealt with, I will receive God's wrath in the day of judgment.
Romans 5:8	Because God loved us, he sent Jesus his Son to pay for the sins of the whole world.
Romans 5:6	Jesus willingly went to the cross where he was punished in my place for my sin.
Romans 6:23	This sacrifice is sufficient to atone for all sin, to bring forgiveness to any man.
Romans 2:4	God's grace brings salvation the moment one believes in Jesus and repents.
Romans 6:4	Jesus was raised from the dead as a seal of God's authority to save.
John 3:16	Whoever believes in Jesus will be raised from death into eternal life with God.

The Gospel is always that which the Church is moving people towards, and Community Groups should be very deliberate about this. It dictates how we move visiting nonbelievers towards a response to Jesus, how we remind the hearts of believers to gather round the Cross and remember the sacrifice of our Savior, how we live with the mission of Jesus alive in our hearts because he died for every soul and gave his followers the task to make it known.

STAGES OF COMMUNITY GROUPS

NEW GROUPS

It's easy to expect too much of a new group. What you can't forget is that groups thrive on experience, and you have to start somewhere, so keep it simple. The main objective to a new group learning how to create community is simply to get to know each other. Here are some objectives to pursue relationships in simplicity and get a group started strong:

Ask the easy questions. Early-stage group times might need ice-breakers. Start at the shallow end of things that are easy for people to share. "What is something you love?" People like to answer questions about their passions and it teaches you who they are.

Make a memory. The people you love the most in life are the ones you have a lot of formative memories with. Make it a priority in the early stages of your new group to ditch a discussion night in favor of bowling, a road trip, a BBQ, etc. Go find your fun and make a memory. You'll be amazed how fun can lay foundations for fellowship.

Establish our boundaries. Start with great communication about the purpose of your group. Be exceedingly clear about *best practices*⁴ such as attendance expectations, punctuality, childcare, and how you intend to grow your group and invite new people.

GROWING GROUPS

Groups tend to start really small, sometimes with just three people! What's important is keeping it small, even as it grows. This is up to the Leader. Once a small group surpasses about 12 people, it is no longer small. Everyone is not able to be known, which is a problem.

Make sure your group knows cap number and is informed of the strategy if the group should become larger than this. Help them to develop a good process for bringing people in until you reach the cap. A good method is to have them communicate with the Leader if they have invited someone, before that person attends a gathering. This puts the leader in a position to inform the rest of the group, and to take ownership of these new people attending.

After new attenders have been there about 3 weeks, a Group Leader ought to meet with them after a gathering and communicate the expectations of being a part of the group, and invite them to be a regular, committed part of the Community Group.

DIVIDING OR MULTIPLYING

Community Groups are capable of reaching a stage where one group can birth another. There are right and wrong ways to do this, and there are right and wrong reasons to do this. At Redeemer's, we do not create an expectation for Community Groups to split. A group should not feel like they have failed if they do not "multiply their group." Again, values are more important than method, so what makes a group successful is living out the biblical values for community. It is not necessary to split a group to accomplish this, but there are also ways to multiply that are very much values-based.

Calling matters. New groups require Group Leaders who are called to their post. For a group to multiply, it is important to raise up someone who will break off and lead the new group from a place of capability and calling. The upside is that the former group can be intentional in preparing them for this. They can be eased into leadership opportunities and will be operating from a place of experience. It never hurts to have a former group pray for you either!

Draw up a game plan. Once a group member knows they want to launch a new group, communication becomes the key to success. Both the old and the new leader must be clear on when the group launch will happen and who is leaving and staying in the initial group. These leaders should be making decisions together in the process, but cannot make decisions for others in the group as to which group they will be a part of. Cast the vision to your group for serving Christ by expanding community, then let the members make the choice as to whether they want to help by acting as core members of a new group.

Divide groups, not interests. Everyone should be a part of one Community Group, but not more. When birthing a new group it is important that the members and leaders are fully committed to that group, and severing from the old group is part of that process.

The "community planter." Some people are gifted and passionate to form new Community Groups. It is very much possible for the leader who started a group to leave it in the hands of an apprentice leader they have raised up, and for the original leader to be the one to leave and give birth to a new Community Group.

Churches send missionaries all the time to bring Christ to the nations. Your group can send a missionary of community and help create new environments where people are drawn to discipleship through relationships.

