



INTRODUCTION

Start community group with an opening prayer. (If the group doesn't know each other, take a moment for everyone to introduce themselves and share how long they've been a Christian.)

Community isn't just a nice option; it's a need—like food, water, and shelter.

God created in us a need for him and for other people. We're relational beings because he is a relational being. Our community with others becomes the real-world setting where we practice the love our relationship with God produces in us.

“This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.” 1 John 5:2-3

He uses other people to grow us, and He uses us to grow other people.

Over the next four weeks, we will explore the connection between relationship with God and community with other people. We will talk about how the two are essential components of growing spiritually and living life to the full. The central purpose of today is for us to get to know one another so we can set a firm foundation for a great Community Group experience.

ICE BREAKER

Choose three of the five questions to answer:

1. What is your favorite movie? Why?
2. What was your first job? What do you remember most about it?
3. You have been given a one-year sabbatical from work. What would you do?
4. If your house were on fire, what three items (not people) would you try to save?
5. My favorite way to spend time is _____.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

Set expectations about what will happen during our group meetings. This is important because different group members will have different ideas about what should happen. Some will want as much social time as possible. Others will be primarily interested in study. Still others will prefer to spend most of the group time in prayer.

All three activities are important to a great group experience. We can decide as a group how much time we want to spend in each. The important thing is everyone knows what to expect.

"And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Hebrews 10:24–25

Try to manage the group's time well. Don't be too rigid— it's okay to put aside the group agenda when life happens and a group member is facing a major challenge—but stick as closely as possible to the meeting agenda you've agreed on as a group. Some of our group members will be frustrated if, for example, social time consistently stretches on too long, stealing time from the study and prayer portions of the evening.

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:2

Community can be challenging because we are all different. Let's remember that. Each is made up of different people with different backgrounds and experiences. But the very thing that can make community challenging can also make it great. As we get involved in real people's lives, faith leaves the realm of religious information and becomes a vibrant part of life in the real world. Jesus didn't give us a specific system or program with which to grow in our relationship with him. He gave us one another. He gave us community.

Life is better connected because connected people go further, faster.

We hope this group will provide you with deep community. Whether it does will be partly determined by factors outside your control, like group chemistry. However, some things *are* within your control. We would like for you to do three things:

- 1. Show Up.** Let's all make a commitment to be at group meetings. We can't form community with other people if we aren't around enough for them to get to know us.
- 2. Join In.** Take part in group discussions. Listen to what others have to say. Be part of the community you are trying to form.
- 3. Be Real.** Let the people in this group know who you are. Be real and authentic. You don't have to reveal all your deepest, darkest secrets. But be open to the possibility that you may eventually form the kind of deep relationships in which you can share those secrets.

CLOSING

Before ending the meeting, make sure everyone has everyone's contact information. Maybe share birthdays or anniversary's if everyone feels comfortable, so the group can celebrate those special days. **Have a moment to share Circle Up, and how they can get it from our website at lighthousecoc.com under groups.**

“We are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.” Ephesians 4:15-16

Explain your next meeting day and time. End the meeting with allowing three people to pray.