

# FOLLOW

## Community Group Study Booklet

Grand Centre Alliance Church

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# Introduction

Welcome to our Community Group Study booklet. We hope you will be challenged by the group studies and discussions and inspired to dive deeper into your faith.

The Community Group Studies are designed to challenge you as a group of believers to wrestle with God's Word and apply what it teaches to your life as followers of Jesus. Each study has 3 areas of discussion followed by a time of prayer.

1. **Discussion Starter...** meant to help generate discussion and usually related to the theme of the study.
2. **In the Word...** discussion of the text itself and what it teaches.
3. **Application Questions...** personal questions designed to help the group wrestle through the text as well as discussion on how we can apply what we have learned together as a Community Group.

Each study in this booklet also follows our current sermon series and you can catch up on a missed sermon by going to our website and listening to the sermon [www.gcalliance.org](http://www.gcalliance.org).

We hope you enjoy your Community Group experience and that it helps you dive into the deeper life in Christ!

# About Community Groups

Community Groups are a place where you can encourage, challenge, and help each other demonstrate the life of Jesus. Our primary goal is not to have friendships, study, pray, or do ministry; rather, the primary goal of Biblical community is to *become more like Jesus* by engaging with one another in the 4 cornerstones that our Community Groups are built on:

1. **Community!!!** Our primary goal in creating this ministry is that we believe that no one can mature in their faith without living in authentic Biblical community with other believers. Jesus gave us the church so we could live out our faith and grow together in community all in God's ultimate plan to conform each one of us into the Image of His Son. Consequently, these groups are NOT primarily Bible Studies. They are an opportunity to do life together with other Christians who desire the deeper life in Christ. This is also why we want our community groups to eat together (meals, BBQs, desserts, snacks, etc.). It seems odd, but food plays an important role in authentic community. We see that this was the example of the early church as they broke bread together whenever they met. Hospitality is key to having a warm and inviting environment for community to grow and flourish.
2. **Scripture...** Authentic Biblical community needs to involve God's word. The reason the Studies are connected to the Sunday sermon series is so that we can put some thought and action into what God is saying to us as we hear the word preached and discuss it together in our groups.
3. **Prayer...** another essential component to a thriving community of believers is prayer. Praying together with other believers is essential to authentic Biblical community. There are many things we need to pray for and what better place to get your prayer requests and prayer needs prayed for than in community with other believers? Your group prayer time needs to include these 5 essential areas of prayer:

- a. *Prayer for our community of Cold Lake.* This is where God has placed us and desires us to live out our faith. Our city needs Jesus, and it begins with believers praying for this to happen and then living out the light of the gospel in our daily lives.
  - b. *Prayer for our church.* As we seek God's desires for us and the deeper life in Christ, we can expect opposition from the enemy. Pray against him and lift our leadership up in prayer.
  - c. *Prayer for lost friends.* One of the keyways we can keep from becoming selfish and self-centered in our groups is lift up in a prayer a person/couple/family that you want to see become Christians.
  - d. *Prayer for your International Worker...* each group is linked to an international worker and your prayer are vital to them!
  - e. *Prayer for each other.* We all have needs and worries and stresses so our community groups are meant to be a place where believers can come along side of one another and lift each other up in times of need.
4. **Serving...** the final component to our Community Groups is serving. Nothing brings people together better (especially men) than working or serving together. Without this fourth component our Community Groups will become just another place to consume Christian stuff without any outward action. We are not interested in just being all talk. We need to act as well to faithfully demonstrate the life of Jesus. Start praying that God will show you areas of need around you where your group can help. It might be a single mother across the street who needs her car fixed, an elderly couple who need work done to their home, a person you know who has lost a loved one and could use some meals, a cause that captures the heart of your group – the list goes on! Because of busy schedules, this often becomes the part of community we overlook. My suggestion is to use one of your regularly planned meeting nights to put your faith in action and serve together.

I am excited about our community groups this year as I believe that God is going to do some great things in our groups. Anticipate that God is going to work and that you will be stretched in your faith and grow to be more like Jesus through it.

# Follow

*1 John 2:6... “Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”*

The “Follow” series was inspired by a desire to dive into what it looks like to walk like Jesus did in our world today, and to emphasize healthy habits that stir our affections for Jesus. If we are to walk as Jesus walked, we will need these habits to keep us from drifting away from God’s desires and design for our lives. But, what does walking as Jesus did mean? And, is walking as Jesus walked even possible? It is questions like these that got us thinking on how we can live out what the Bible directly tells us – walk like Jesus. Unfortunately, most of us are at a complete loss when we see how far we need to go to achieve the standards of the Bible – where do we start? The vastness of this task often paralyzes us, and we do not even get started. There is good news, however. God does not expect us to “achieve” or “attain” the same level of holiness and righteousness Jesus had, but rather to humbly commit ourselves to the way of Christ. He desires us to join him on a journey of spiritual growth and vitality that has nothing to do with your spiritual achievements and everything to do with aligning yourself to his purposes and desires for you.

*Being a Disciple is not just about the destination, but rather a whole-hearted embrace of the journey.*

North American culture (both secular and Christian) has caused a lot of confusion over what being a disciple is. Rarely in our fast-paced culture is our “commute” viewed as significant, but rather a means to what is really important – the destination! Our lives are defined by where we are and where we are trying to get. This makes it very difficult for us to understand what it means to be a disciple and that God desires us to embrace the journey rather than to fixate on the destination. Our “Follow” series is going to emphasize the importance of the journey itself and provide us with practical steps that enable us to get started

with Jesus on the road to being a disciple and embracing our sanctification (fancy word meaning becoming more like Jesus).

*“People do not, will not, drift towards holiness apart from grace driven effort. People do not gravitate towards godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. Instead, we drift towards compromise and call it tolerance; we drift towards disobedience and call it freedom; we drift towards superstition and call it faith; we cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch towards prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide towards godlessness and convince ourselves that we have been liberated.”*

– D.A. Carson

Finally, the “Follow” series is designed to help us be more intentional about the journey we find ourselves on. It is clear in the Great Commission mandate that making disciples includes “...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded”. Walking like Jesus walked does not happen by accident. It is our natural inclination to drift away from him rather than towards him; consequently, intentionality is essential. In fact, that is what our part is. God is responsible for making us grow and for conforming us into the image of his Son. Our part is to intentionally align ourselves with God’s purposes and what God desires to do in us and through us. The good news is that the Bible provides clear expectations for followers of Jesus and spurs God’s people on to fill their lives with healthy habits and practices that will stir their affections for Jesus. These intentional things we do through grace-driven effort enable us to step out in faith and allow God to transform us. They are the means by which we can join Jesus on the journey to become more like him.

# *Group Study 1: Biblical Community*

*Texts: 1 Cor 12:12-27; Col 3:12-17*

## *Discussion Starter*

What comes to your mind when you think of the words “biblical community”?

## *In the Word*

1. What kinds of things have you seen community formed around (ie. Sports, movies, book clubs, etc.)? Why do you think this happens?
2. From the Colossians passage, what are some of the key components of Christian community?
3. Does your experience of Christian community echo what Paul writes in Colossians? Explain.
4. After reading our 1 Corinthians passage, summarize how you think gifting and community are related.
5. Why do you think it is essential for these different aspects of community (giftings) to be present in the Body of Christ?

## *Application Questions*

6. What sort of personal investment would you need on your part to experience biblical community?
7. How can your group better reflect the community Paul writes about in the New Testament?



## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by dedicating this next season of community groups to God. Ask him to work in your hearts and to help you become a vibrant healthy community of believers.

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

# *Group Study 2: Becoming a Servant*

*Texts: John 13:1-17; Eph 2:8-10*

## *Discussion Starter*

Recount a time when you have been served well by someone and share it with the group. What response do you have when someone serves you well?

## *In the Word*

1. Place yourself at the table with Jesus in the role of the disciple. Would you have a problem with the almighty God cleaning your toe jam with his clothes? Why or why not?
2. The Bible is crystal clear regarding God's intention for his people to serve one another, yet so few are actively involved in serving. Why do you think serving is such a low priority with most people? (Is it cultural? Pride? Sense of Entitlement? Selfishness? Consumerism?)

## *Application Questions*

3. The human drift is always towards being served rather than serving others. Below there are 4 areas to help us re-orient our lives towards serving rather than being served. How can you grow personally in each area?  
Attitude...                      Humility...  
Posture...                         Lifestyle...
4. Take a few moments to talk about what gifts you see in each other. How can you use your gifts to serve Jesus and his church and/or his mission?
5. What are some ways that your community group can serve together? What needs or opportunities are around you where you might be able to help?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God how you as a group can serve those around you, and that he would bring opportunities to your group to bless others through serving them.

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

## *Study 3: Thanksgiving*

*Texts: Psalm 100; 1 Thess 5:16-18; Col 3:15-17*

### *Discussion Starter*

Start your group discussion off with sharing with each other about what you are thankful for.

### *In the Word*

1. Thankfulness is one of the major themes we find in the Bible. The Scripture expresses thanks to God, describes his people as a thankful people and commands his people to have a posture of gratitude.
  - What are the outward evidences of someone who has a grateful heart?
  - What are the outward evidences of someone who has an ungrateful heart?
  - Why do you think gratitude is an essential posture of God's people?
2. How are joy, generosity and gratitude interdependent?
3. What makes it difficult to maintain the posture of thankfulness?
4. What are some practices Believers can adopt that will help them maintain the posture of a thankful person?

### *Application Question*

5. How can you as a group help each other out when it comes to being thankful people (what things need to go and what needs to be added or embraced)?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to help your group grow in their thankfulness individually and as a group of Believers.

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

# *Study 4: Worship & the Gathering*

*Texts: Heb 10:19-25; Eph 5:15--21; Psalm 96*

## *Discussion Starter*

How has worshipping together with other Believers helped shape your understanding of God and his people?

## *In the Word*

1. What's the difference between personal and corporate worship? Do we need both? Why or why not?
2. Why does God, throughout the Scriptures, place such a great importance on his people gathering together to worship him?
3. The Psalmist recounts why God deserves our praises. Make a list of God's attributes the passage highlights that we are to praise him for.
4. What key ingredients does Paul list for community worship in the Ephesians passage?
5. What posture do we need to have to enter into this gathering of worship?

## *Application Questions*

6. Do you find it easy or difficult to enter into corporate worship? Explain.
7. What factors or barriers make corporate worship more difficult than personal worship?
8. Discuss ways you can prepare yourself to better engage in corporate worship (heart, focus, attitude, posture, etc.).

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to help you become more connected to him and to your fellow believers through community worship. Ask him to work in your hearts to give you a great desire to be with God's people and to join with one another in praise and worship of our great God!

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

# *Group Study 5: Generosity*

*Texts: 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; 1 Timothy 6:9-10*

## *Discussion Starter*

When you think of generosity, what or who comes to mind?

## *In the Word*

1. We often forget that our God has unlimited resources and drift toward a scarcity mentality. Explain what a “scarcity mentality” is and where you see it in our culture.
2. What is your biggest obstacle to being a generous person?
3. Describe how God has been generous towards us.
4. Why is money and generosity such a touchy subject for so many people? What is the underlying problem that causes this discomfort?

## *Application Questions*

5. Who decides whether you are actually being generous – what/whose standard are we measured by?
6. What steps can you take to grow in generosity and become a more generous person?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to show you how you can be a more generous person.

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)



# *Group Study 6: Prayer & the Word*

*Texts: Matthew 6:5-15; John 16:23-24*

## *Discussion Starter*

Share some examples of answered prayer in your life. How does knowing that God listens affect your desire to pray?

## *In the Word*

1. What are some of the “do’s” and “don’ts” from our passages regarding prayer?
2. What are some of the “posture” related instructions regarding prayer?
3. What obstacles interfere with your time alone with God?
4. What does it mean to pray in Jesus’ name and what does it look like to have a posture of “your will be done”?

## *Application Questions*

5. Discuss what consistency looks like regarding prayer. What do you think God expects of you as one of his children?
6. What small steps can you take towards more consistent and meaningful conversation with God?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to put a deep desire in your hearts to have consistent conversation with him.

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

# *Group Study 7: Sabbath: A Rhythm of Life*

*Texts: Gen 2:2-3; Ex 20:8-11; Is 58:13-15*

## *Discussion Starter*

Why did God need to rest on the 7<sup>th</sup> day? Was he tired?

## *In the Word*

1. What has been your experience of “Sabbath rest”? What does it mean to you?
2. Why do you think God places so much importance on his people practicing Sabbath?
3. The Jews observed the seventh day every week for Sabbath. The early Christians began practicing it on the first day of the week. What do you think Sabbath should look like in our culture and time?
4. What do you think the consequences are today for failing to practice Sabbath?
5. After reading the Isaiah passage, list some of the promises attached to keeping Sabbath. Does God still desire to bless us in these ways for keeping Sabbath? Why or why not?

## *Application Questions*

6. What are some hindrances to practicing Sabbath do you face in your life?
7. As a group, we recognize that your knowledge and experience of Sabbath is very diverse. What are some simple practices that can help you have a healthier rhythm of Sabbath in your life?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to bless you with a healthy rhythm of Sabbath in your life. Ask him to show you what needs to change in your life in order to make this new rhythm a reality.

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

# *Study 8: Hospitality*

*Texts: 1 Peter 4:8-11; Heb 13:1-3; Rom 12:9-13*

## *Discussion Starter*

What is the difference between fellowship and hospitality?

## *In the Word*

1. The scripture is clear that God desires his people to show hospitality to one another as well as to strangers. Why do you think God puts such a great emphasis on his people being hospitable?
2. What are some ways that God is hospitable to us?
3. Is our culture known for being hospitable? What do you think are the underlying issues?
4. Practicing hospitality seems to be linked to other things like love and concern for others. What do you think a “posture” of hospitality looks like?
- 5.

## *Application Questions*

6. Intentionality is a big part of hospitality. What intentional steps can you take grow in hospitality in your life?
7. How can you as a group practice hospitality to one another (not just a select few!)?

## *Prayer*

Begin your prayer time by asking God to help you become more hospitable people. Ask him to show you what you need to change to make this happen.

*Continuing in prayer...*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for your International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)

## *Study 9: Fun & Fellowship*

*Texts: John 2:1-11; Matt 11:16-19; Ecc 2:24-26*

### *Discussion Starter*

What was the most fun you've ever had? For what purpose do you think God has hardwired us to desire experiences that are fun?

### *In the Word*

1. There is subtle humour in John's story – specifically the exchange between Jesus and his mother. Can you spot it?
2. One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy, so Jesus would have had a full measure of joy. What do you think it was like to be in the presence of someone with perfect joy?
3. The OT is filled with feasts and festivals for God's people. Why did God insist that people have fun together? What is produced by this rhythm of life?
4. Explore Solomon's words in Ecc. What are your thoughts?

### *Application Questions*

5. What types of things can your group do to add an element of fun and fellowship to your weekly get-togethers?
6. Time to make some plans! Make plans to have a fun evening together next week for your group meeting.

### *Prayer*

Pray for our community of Cold Lake

Pray for our church

Pray for salvation for lost friends (have at least one group member share a friend/couple/family they want to see become Christians)

Pray for you International Worker

Pray for each other (personal requests)



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