

# COMMUNITY GROUP **LEADER GUIDE**

START YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP STRONG

HARVEST  
BIBLE  
CHAPEL

**THIS BOOK  
BELONGS TO:**

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# CONTENTS

07     GETTING STARTED

08     A VISION FOR BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

10     MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

12     CREATING A COMMUNITY OF GROWING DISCIPLES

16     ESTABLISHING A FIRM FOUNDATION

18     PLANNING YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

21     COMMUNITY MATTERS

22     NOTES

# GETTING STARTED

AS A COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER

## THE PROCESS

Follow these steps to begin your journey as a Community Group Leader at Harvest Bible Chapel:

- ☐ **BECOME A MEMBER OF HARVEST**  
If you are not a member of Harvest, reach out to your campus leadership to complete the membership process.

- ☐ **COMPLETE COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER GUIDE**  
Every new Community Group Leader must complete this guide and confirm its completion with their leader.

- ☐ **COMPLETE THE COMMUNITY GROUP LEADER APPLICATION**  
Contact your campus leadership about completing the leader application.

- ☐ **MAKE A PLAN**  
Work with a team member to establish a plan for launching your Community Group.

- ☐ **GROUPS LEADER CONNECTION**  
Once you have submitted the application, a staff member will contact you and talk about starting your group.

# A VISION FOR BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

Read the passage below, filling in the blanks as you go.  
This will establish a vision for biblical community.

## ACTS 2:42-47 (ESV)

<sup>42</sup>And they \_\_\_\_\_ themselves to the \_\_\_\_\_  
and the fellowship, to the breaking of \_\_\_\_\_ and the  
\_\_\_\_\_. <sup>43</sup>And awe came upon \_\_\_\_\_, and many  
wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.  
<sup>44</sup>And all who believed were \_\_\_\_\_ and had \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. <sup>45</sup>And they were selling their possessions and  
belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had  
need. <sup>46</sup>And day by day, \_\_\_\_\_  
and breaking bread in their homes, they \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_\_ and generous hearts, <sup>47</sup>\_\_\_\_\_ God and  
having \_\_\_\_\_ with all the people. And \_\_\_\_\_ to  
their number day by day those who were being \_\_\_\_\_.

## A VISION FOR BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

God created us for **community**.

First and foremost, we are designed to be with Jesus. God has called us to Himself, and when we enter into relationship with Him through Christ, we grow in our love and knowledge of Him.

Secondly, we are created to be in relationship with others.

We were not designed to live in isolation. God created us to fellowship with others and to have people speak into our lives. As we commit to a community of believers, we have opportunities to love one another and reflect Christ.

Biblical community is **uncommon**.

When we come together as believers, we are able to walk together as we live out our faith.

True biblical community should be hospitable, open, and intentional. As we invest in each other this way, we should look more like Christ by showing the marks of discipleship in our lives.

# MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

## UNIQUELY PLANTED

**JESUS' DISCIPLES ARE PLACED HERE AND NOW TO REACH OTHERS WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.**

The first disciples were called to serve God as they were uniquely planted in their culture, workplaces, and families, and they chose to obey God and pursue Him.

God has uniquely crafted and created each person. For disciples of Jesus, they represent God where they work, live, study and play.

Each person has a unique story and mission, and as disciples, we want to live on mission where the Lord has planted us.

## DEEPLY ROOTED

**JESUS' DISCIPLES HAVE A GROWING KNOWLEDGE OF WHO HE IS AND WHO THEY ARE IN HIM.**

As the first disciples spent time with Jesus, they grew in understanding who Jesus is.

Believers today are called to spend time with God through prayer and studying scriptures to understand Him and love Him more.

A growing knowledge of God's Word will help us to root our thinking and living in the truth of who God is.

## CAREFULLY PRUNED

**JESUS' DISCIPLES SUBMIT TO BEING PERSONALLY AND THOUGHTFULLY DISCIPLINED BY A LOVING GOD.**

The Holy Spirit uses God's Word and biblical community to reveal areas in our lives that need correction. As believers seek to imitate Christ, we are pruned of worldliness.

Carefully pruned disciples also recognize that suffering and hardship produce endurance and are for our good. Through discipline and pruning, we become more like Christ.

## PERSISTENTLY FRUITFUL

**JESUS' DISCIPLES PRODUCE FRUIT, EMPOWERED BY ABIDING WITH JESUS.**

True disciples not only profess Jesus, they continue their walk with Christ and increasingly reflect Him.

Disciples live missionally, proclaiming the gospel with their words and actions. Persistence is the quality of staying with something through the realities of both triumph and adversity.

Persistent fruitfulness is the outcome of continuing on mission for Jesus over the long haul.

# UNIQUELY PLANTED

## PRACTICE

Psalms 139:14,16 says:

"I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well...in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them."

Being uniquely planted means you recognize God's intentionality in your life and the community He placed you in. As each person grows in their understanding of how they are uniquely planted, your group will flourish to its full potential.

Being in Community Group will help each leader and member better understand how their stories, passions and abilities have all been given by God to impact the world around us.

## RESOURCES

**MY DESIGN CLASS:** A class that introduces people to the joy and effectiveness they can have following Jesus when they know their unique calling in life, wherever they are on their faith journey.

## TRAINING

Harvest will help equip you to grow in two disciple-making skills:

- Empowering Group Members
- Developing a Co-Leader

# DEEPLY ROOTED

## PRACTICE

Colossians 2:6-7 says:

"...as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith..."

Disciples of Jesus cultivate a lifestyle where our roots are so deep that we stand strong when storms come. It means connecting with God regularly through His Word and letting our knowledge of the Word guide how we view the world, ourselves, and those around us. It's also investing in a community of believers that will challenge, encourage, and uphold us when the storms hit.

Your Community Group is a place to practice connecting with God through His Word and His people and letting your love for God grow deep.

## RESOURCES

**GROWTH GUIDE:** A weekly discussion guide is created that makes it easy to facilitate a great conversation centered around the Scripture that is preached every Sunday.

## TRAINING

Harvest will help equip you to grow in two disciple-making skills:

- Leading a discussion
- Facilitating prayer

# CAREFULLY PRUNED

## PRACTICE

Hebrews 12:11 says:

“...all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

A Community Group is a spiritual family that motivates one another to abide in Jesus through both the celebrations and trials we face.

Community Groups are a place to intentionally practice the “one another’s” we see in the Bible; and that creates the kind of community that helps us trust Him to use the highs and lows of life to make us more like Him.

## RESOURCES

**CLASSES:** Classes are offered throughout the year on each campus to supplement the growth that is happening while in a Community Group.

## TRAINING

Harvest will help equip you to grow in two disciple-making skills:

- Caring for needs in a Group
- Helping each other live for Christ

# PERSISTENTLY FRUITFUL

## PRACTICE

John 15:8 says:

“By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.”

Being in a Community Group helps people see that obeying God is worth it and attainable. When we are living out our faith together, spurring each other on to know and love God, something special happens – we bear the kind of fruit that draws others to Jesus.

As your group grows together, being fruitful can look different depending on seasons of life and stages of discipleship. You get the job of helping them take their next step, whether it’s starting a Discipleship Group, helping you lead a discussion or taking over managing food or hosting.

## RESOURCES

**DISCIPLESHIP GROUP STARTERS GUIDE:** A resource to launch a Discipleship Group for an accelerated season of spiritual growth.

## TRAINING

Harvest will help equip you to grow in two disciple-making skills:

- Awareness of global and local missions opportunities
- How to multiply a Community Group



# ESTABLISHING A FIRM FOUNDATION

FOR YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

When starting your group, it is important to set expectations early for the rhythms and life of the group. There are four distinguishing characteristics of a Community Group at Harvest. Take some time to read through these below and use the planning guide to brainstorm how your group will adopt these characteristics.

## HOSPITABLE

Community Groups at Harvest are welcoming and comfortable. Fostering an environment of invitation takes some intentional planning and conversations. Encourage your group to always be looking for people to invite to your group. It may become second nature to start asking people you meet at church, “Are you in a group?” Chances are, even in a crowd, there are people who want to belong to a community like yours. If you have space to accommodate them, your group should always be open to new people. When it starts to look like space will soon limit the ability to welcome new people,

that’s a good time to start a conversation with others in your group about replication.

Part of hospitality also includes creating a comfortable space to meet and may even include sharing a meal or snacks. Remembering our vision for biblical community in Acts 2, the early church ate together in their homes “day by day”.

## EVANGELISTIC

Community Groups at Harvest stay On-Mission. “And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47) Because of the fellowship these early Christians modeled, their

faith grew, more people were saved, and God was glorified. Incorporating a vision and plan for evangelism is key to a healthy Community Group. Your group should plan for frequent and regular outreach opportunities, whether it is serving together or planning an event where you all invite neighbors, friends, or co-workers.

Taking turns sharing your testimonies and getting familiar with the 5 Gospel Words is a way to keep the importance of sharing your faith as a priority in and outside of the group. Plan to make this a regular rhythm in your group, and let new members know to be prepared to share their own.

## ACCOUNTABLE

Community Groups at Harvest are committed to being in the Bible and applying life. “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship.” (Acts 2:42) A good portion of every group meeting should include time discussing the Growth Guide.

While it will be appropriate to discuss doctrine and interpretation of the Scripture, the focus of your

discussion should be on the personal application of, and accountability to being a doer of the Word. The Growth Guide is sent out via email newsletter on Sunday afternoons and can be your main curriculum.

## GENEROUS

Community Groups at Harvest are marked by generosity. “And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.” (Acts 2:44-45)

Being generous means giving away what you have to bless others. This most often includes material goods and finances but doesn’t stop there. We are also generous when we share with others how the Lord has blessed us through our groups. One way to do this is to share responsibilities within the group (taking attendance, planning outreach, coordinating food, and training to lead).

Keeping your group together for an extended period can stifle this spirit of generosity, so start the conversation about multiplication early, and have it often with a timeline in mind.

# PLANNING

## YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

Here are five questions that need to be answered before launching a Community Group. Take a moment to think through and answer the following questions.

### WHEN WILL YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP MEET?

Determine the day, time, location, and frequency of the Community Group meetings. It is important to meet regularly and predictably. Many groups will meet once a week or every other week

- Day
- Time
- Location
- Frequency

### HOW WILL WE BREAK THE ICE?

Since new people often come into a Community Group, it is important to have introductions and/or ice breakers as the group starts each week. Depending on the size of the group, you can decide what kind of question or ice breaker you would like to use.

Some ice-breaker examples:

- Highs and Lows: from the past week, what was a high and what was a low for you?
- Starting off with a key question, such as: What brought you to the group? What was something you did this week that was life giving to you?
- Having games or other activities before or after group discussion can help build the group.

### WILL THERE BE FOOD?

Food is not required, but breaking bread together is a great way to connect. Some Community Groups have regular meals, others have snacks, and some may stick to coffee and drinks.

The time of the meeting will have a significant effect on what is being offered to eat. This is a great serving opportunity to delegate to someone in the group or for the group to discuss together.

- Will there be food?
- If so, how?

### WHAT WILL WE DO WITH KIDS?

We love our kids, and we want to find the right way to care for them and the parents in the group. A Community Group can be just as beneficial to the kids as it is for the parents. However, there will be parts of the group time that may be difficult to manage with kids, such as breaking up into prayer and discussion time.

There needs to be a plan on how to best care for the kids and families in the group. Below are some common ways Community Groups handle childcare.

*Note: If meeting at the church, whoever is watching the children must be certified. See your campus leadership about the simple process to certifying volunteers.*

## WHAT WILL WE DO WITH KIDS? (CONTINUED)

How will the Community Group care for the kids and families in the group?

- Children will play independently in a safe space within view of the family (recommended only for older children)
- Each family will rotate taking caring for the children
- The Community Group will coordinate sitters onsite or nearby
- Each family is responsible for their own childcare
- Other

## HOW WILL THE COMMUNITY GROUP COMMUNICATE?

Keeping in touch and communicating information is essential for a Community Group functioning well. Having a specific mode of communication helps promote participation and makes it easy for new members to get connected. It is important to consider needs, culture, and technological savvy. Below are some common tools Community Groups have used to communicate:

- A group text message
- GroupMe App
- WhatsApp
- Church Center Messaging App

## HOW IS THE GROUP LAUNCHING?

Independently:

- Who are some members you want to invite or have invited?

Group Connection:

- The group connection date is: \_\_\_\_\_

# COMMUNITY MATTERS

Biblical community is an essential ingredient in following Jesus and making disciples.

The role of a Community Group leader is one that will never be thanked enough, but makes a huge difference in the lives of everyone who is impacted by the group. Friendships will be formed, and lives will be changed all because you decided to say “Yes” to spearheading a Community Group.

Thank you for stepping out and starting what might be just the most impactful community in someone’s life.

Who knows, it may even be your own.

### NEED TO TALK?

[groups@harvestbible.org](mailto:groups@harvestbible.org) (Need to make this)

### FOR MORE RESOURCES:

[harvestbible.org/groupleaderresources](https://harvestbible.org/groupleaderresources)  
or scan the QR code

NOTES

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NOTES

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We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our loves, because you had become very dear to us.

1 Thessalonians 2:8