**Exploring Small Groups with Your Local Church**

**What is a small group?**

A small group is a gathering of people who meet intentionally and regularly to look to the Lord with the goal of offering mutual acceptance, support, and encouragement for one another's life goals and challenges. Basically, there are three main components that make up a small group:

* There is an intentional gathering. This group of people plans where and when to meet and arrange their schedules to be there. They have a purpose for getting together.
* The group meets regularly. A small group has a regular meeting time and schedule. The groups know when to expect their next gathering.
* The group meets for the purpose of looking to the Lord in their lives.

**Join the Network of the Local Church’s Small Groups**

By registering/joining/becoming a Small Group of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church you gain care from a ‘coach’ (encouragement and support) in the following areas:

* help with enrollment and promotion
* support in choosing content, new direction
* support when troubleshooting/ facing burnout/transitions

**Variety/Balance**

Within the basic framework of a small group, there is room for great variety. Here is a tool to help you discern if you want to launch a small group, become a small group, or perhaps strengthen the balance/effort of your current small group.

Examples of Variety: Semester (short term) vs. Ongoing/long term groups, level of intimacy (getting to know you vs. sharing deep struggles), depth of study (introductory vs. advanced), focus/action (study, serve, care, etc.)

**Concrete Ideas To Expand On Different Elements**

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| Love | Wisdom | Use (think of 6 classes of the neighbor) |
| -Pray together and/or for each other  -Have refreshments/visiting  -Do icebreakers/heart warmers  -Invite others into your group  -Spend longer on “How Are You’s”  -Find activities that are easy to invite others to (ex: bowling, potluck dinners, book club, dinner and a movie, cooking together, etc) | -Study the Bible together  -Read scripture at the beginning of your meeting.  -Do a small group study together (Journey, NCC, etc.)  -Spend time in meditation  -Read the same book at home and discuss at your meeting  -Attend a lecture event together | -Volunteer together (Sunday school, set up chairs, greeters, clean church, gardening)  -Share what you have been studying (ex. mentor younger folks on what you have learned in your group)  -Surprise a family in need w/ a workday to help out around their house.  -Think of the focus of your group and do a relevant service. If yours is a group for working mom’s perhaps a care package for military moms. If your group is studying HH, perhaps visit a hospice and pray with patients, etc. If your group is about finances and spirituality perhaps offer a free workshop to the community etc. |

