

Neighborhood Group Covenant – **with Leader's Notes**

LEADER: _____ LEADER: _____

Neighborhood Groups thrive on participation! The purpose of this agreement is to help you to discuss and clarify your group's goals, expectations, and commitments.

NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS: THEIR PURPOSE

Neighborhood Groups exist to promote spiritual maturity and personal growth through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word (Romans 8:29 & Hebrews 10:24, 25). We'll do this by focusing on four primary activities:

SHARE

Each week we'll take time to share what is happening in our lives. At first this sharing will include planned "get-to-know-you questions." But after the first few weeks, it will become more informal and personal as we feel more comfortable.

STUDY

Each week we'll study a section from God's Word that relates to the previous weekend's sermon. Our goal is to learn how to live out our life with Christ and with others.

SUPPORT

Each week we'll learn how to take care of one another as Christ commanded (John 15:9-13). This care can take many forms such as prayer, encouragement, listening, challenging one another, and meeting real needs.

GRACE

We will respect each other and create a safe space for people to share and be heard.

SERVE

Spiritual growth is fostered not only by what we gain through the support and input of others, but also through service to others. The role each of us fills is important to the health of the church and for us to be the hands and feet of Jesus to our community (Ephesians 4:11-16). Throughout the quarter, it is our hope that you can find and/or be affirmed in the ways God has designed you to serve, and make a difference in God's Kingdom.

FIVE MARKS OF A HEALTHY GROUP - **with Leader's Notes**

For our group to be healthy, we need to...

1. **Make spiritual growth our number one priority** (Romans 8:29).
 - *Tangents – they are okay sometimes, but sometimes we need to be refocused. We'll need to keep spiritual growth our focus and stay on topic.*
2. **Accept one another** (Romans 15:7).
 - *We will have different preferences.*
3. **Take care of one another** (John 13:34).
 - *When crisis happens we're there to help with support, prayer, encouragement, listening, meals etc.*
4. **Treat each other with respect** (Ephesians 4:25-5:2).
 - *Listening to one another; if one's talking let's all listen. There's nothing worse than two conversations going on at once.*
 - *Our goal is to listen, not give advice. (Advice is only given when asked for.) We are not here to judge or fix – unless someone asks. An example of giving advice is by saying, "Well this is what I think you should do." On the other hand, that doesn't mean we can't question what is said or what someone is doing.*
 - *Some of us have the gift of gab, also known as a dominator – be careful, I as a leader might have to help you.*
 - *Be careful of gossip prayers. For example, "we need to pray for (person's name) because they are doing this ..."*
 - *No put-downs.*
 - *What is said here, stays here – of course we never promise confidentiality if something shared would be harmful to yourself or someone else and/or if I, as the leader, need to seek counsel on how to respond to an issue in the group.*
5. **Keep our commitments to the group**
(Psalm 15:1-2, 4b).
 - *Please give us a call if you can't make it to group so we know what's going on and how to pray for you.*

GUIDELINES & AGREEMENT – with Leader's Notes

Fill in blanks

1. **Note:** Neighborhood Groups will run on a quarterly basis, meeting weekly during those quarters. Our 1st quarter beginning in February will run for 8 weeks. We will take a two week break and begin our 2nd quarter on the third week of April and will end in mid-June. We will take the summer off and begin our 3rd quarter in September. *See pg. 26 in the Leader's Handbook for more info.*
2. **Date:** We'll meet on _____ (day of the week)
3. **Time:** We'll arrive between _____ & _____ and begin the meeting at _____. We'll spend approximately _____ minutes in fellowship, _____ minutes in study/discussion, and _____ minutes in prayer/sharing. We will end promptly at _____
4. **Host home (s):** We will meet at _____
Group may want to rotate homes or always meet at the same house
5. **Children** (if part of your group): Group members are responsible to arrange child care for their children or agree to having:

6. **Study:** Our studies will focus on the same topic covered in the previous Sunday's sermon. Our goal is to learn how to live out our Christianity in our everyday life.
Not answer every question!
Encourage everyone to take notes on Sunday!
7. **Prayer:** We will spend time praying for one another. *Remember – being forced to pray in group or just the idea of it can cause people to not want to come to your group. If you have new people in your group, you might want to say something like this: "It's exciting to see how God works in our lives through prayer. We also realize prayer in groups is something many have never done. Know that you will never be forced to pray." Let them know you'll talk more in the weeks to come on how we do group prayer and that we break a lot of the stereotypes of what it means to pray.*
8. **Attendance:** Joining a Neighborhood Group requires a commitment to attend each week. Obviously, allowances are made for sickness, vacation, work conflicts, and other special events. *This commitment is the key to a healthy group.*
9. **Dinner or Desserts?:** Unique to each group. *Discuss with the group what is preferable, to come fed and have dessert or do a weekly potluck.*

If we cannot come to a meeting, we will contact (Who/How):

Make sure everyone has your contact information (email address or mobile number)

Emphasize the importance of the commitment to attendance and preparation