COMMUNITY GROUP CARE GUIDE
PROVIDING MEALS FOR THOSE IN YOUR GROUP

When someone in your group walks through a season of need, one of the simplest and most meaningful ways we can love them is by providing meals. This guide is here to help you know when to offer a meal train and what our expectations are so that care is consistent, thoughtful, and not overwhelming for anyone involved. Remember, as a Care Leader your role is prayer, care, and to make aware!

Situations Where a Meal Train May Be Helpful

Meal trains are typically appropriate during seasons when daily rhythms are disrupted or energy is limited. Examples include (but aren't limited to):

- Birth or adoption of a child
- Major surgery or hospitalization
- Extended illness or medical treatment
- Significant injury or mobility limitations
- Death in the family
- Other major life events that create short-term need for practical support

The Process

1. Ask First
The Care Leader of the group should reach out first to the person/family and ask if it would be helpful to set up a meal train. Not everyone wants or needs one, and that's okay! Oftentimes family or friends have already set one up that you can participate in.

2. Set Clear Expectations
 If they say yes, offer:
- **Up to 3 meals per week**
- **For up to 3 weeks**

This keeps the process from becoming overwhelming or confusing for those involved. If there ends up being more interest to help than available spots, you can always open additional days later. Our goal is simply to fill the initial 3-meals-for-3-weeks first before expanding.

3. Create and Share
 If they agree, create the meal train and share it with:
- Your Community Group
- Church staff (encouraged)

This link is helpful to know how to create a meal train using mealtrain.com.

4. Check In Again
Provide continual support through prayer and check in regularly. After the initial timeframe, follow up to see if continued support would be helpful.