



NEW
CITY

GROUPS

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WHY SMALL GROUPS EXIST

Small Groups have one, simple purpose—to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of **Relationships**.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Small Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12

New City Church Small Groups Model

At New City Church, we believe our church must grow **larger** and **smaller** at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus. We gather in Small Groups to build community and care for people.

New City Church is a church **of** Small Groups, not a church **with** Small Groups.

We base our Small Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42

Small Groups offer people:

1. A Place to **connect**

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Small Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A Place to **protect**

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Small Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

3. A Place to **grow**

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Small Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

WHAT A SMALL GROUP LOOKS LIKE

Your Life is Your Group

At New City, we use a **free market approach** to Small Groups. This means we want people to gather together based on the things they enjoy and are important to them. Essentially, the things you are already doing in your life are the things that can make up your Small Group!

Free market leaders form their group around their **gifts** or **interests**.

From sports groups to lunch groups, mom groups to student groups, Bible study groups to creative arts groups, our groups are as varied as we are. All groups fall within one of 5 hubs.

- Everyone
- Married/Family
- Ladies
- Men
- Youth

Group Structure

Groups meet **weekly** during each semester.

Groups meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops and office buildings.

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.

No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

1. Casual Fellowship

Laid back time for group members to talk and get to know each other.

2. Activity or Discussion

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be an activity like Frisbee or outreach or a discussion about a book or Sunday message.

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

4. Spiritual Component

This is what differentiates your Small Group from your neighborhood supper club. Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week.

Small Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topics

Your Role as a Small Group Leader

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Small Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of New City to help care for people.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Small Group Leader is to help group members **move one step** in their walk with God.

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;

PROVERBS 27:23

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some next steps you can help people take:

- Start attending weekend services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Be water baptized
- Attend the Discover Track
- Join the Dream Team
- Start tithing
- Attend a Grow Class
- Invite a friend or neighbor to church or a Small Group

How to be a successful Small Group Leader:

1. **Pray daily** for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a **co-leader** to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. **Connect** with group members between weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
4. Have **fun** through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
5. Respect people's **time** by beginning and ending your group on time.
6. **Invite** group members to attend church services and events with you like Grow Classes, church conferences, or outreach opportunities.
7. **Rally** the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a **foundation** of our church, and it is important for your Small Group.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

Confidence as a Small Group Leader

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. God's best is often found outside your comfort zone.

When you serve God and people by leading a Small Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NLT

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NLT

When you feel uncertain about leading a group, use Scripture to overcome the lies of the enemy:

1. When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has created you for this, and His timing is perfect.

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

ECCLESIASTES 11:4 TLB

2. When you feel unqualified, remember God has equipped you.

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6 NLT

3. When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses imperfect people.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

- E:** Encourage
- S:** Scripture
- P:** Prayer
- N:** Next Steps

Leadership Support

As a Small Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. We have pastors, staff, and the Small Groups Team who are all working alongside you to invest in great Small Groups at New City.

Your Team

As a Small Group Leader, you have a team behind you to help as you need support throughout the semester. Your team consists of a Huddle Leader, Connection Coach and Small Groups Pastor.

Your team's number one responsibility is to **pray for you**.

Reach out to your Huddle Leader if you have a need, prayer request, or concern.

How to create good group dynamics:

- Set expectations.

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

- Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

- Keep discussion positive.

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your Huddle Leader to help you respond well.

- Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

- Respect boundaries.

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Small Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

Stay Connected

Throughout the semester, respond to your Coach and the Small Groups team about group attendance, potential new Small Group Leaders, and how members are moving one step.

Preparing to Lead

All Small Group Leaders complete the following steps before leading:

- Complete the New City Church Discover Track
- Become a New City Church Family Member
- Attend a Small Group Leadership Training
- Sign the Small Group Leadership Commitment

DISCOVER TRACK is happening at every service, every weekend. The steps correspond to the weekend of the month and the first 3 steps can be taken in any order and must be completed to attend step 4. If you haven't done so already, you are all welcome and encouraged to attend. *The Discover Track is a necessary step for all new Small Group Leaders.*

HOW TO START YOUR SMALL GROUP

1. Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.
2. Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
3. Register your group in the online Small Groups Directory so people can find it and contact you to attend. Contact your Huddle Leader for access.
4. Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group.
5. Pray for God to do great things through your Small Group.

Preparing for your group meetings:

- Send a message to group members reminding them about the first meeting.
- Arrive early to set up a welcoming environment.
- Consider having nametags available to help everyone learn names for the first few weeks.

Conversation

Here are a couple conversation starters to help get people talking as your group gets to know each other:

- How did you learn about our group?
- What are your hobbies?
- What are you looking forward to this year?
- What brought you here?
- What are you hoping to get out of this Small Group?

AVAILABLE RESOURCES

RightNow Media: a great resource for small group curriculum and personal leadership development. Check it out at:



RightNowMedia.org

You can gain access by letting your Huddle Coach know you're interested and we will send you an email invite.

Planning Center Groups: a simple, effective platform for promoting, communicating with and tracking your group. Check it out at:



groups.planningcenteronline.com

Let your Huddle Coach know if you need help gaining access to Planning Center

New City Mobile App: access the latest sermon video, the daily Bible reading program, a sermon-based group discussion guide and so much more!!!



Search "New City Church" in the app store/Google Play

Church Center App: this app gives you access to your group info where you can communicate with your group, take attendance and share valuable group resources.



Search "Church Center" in the app store/Google Play

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How can I recruit people to come to my group?

- Start with people who are already in your sphere of influence (family, co-workers, friends, and neighbors).
- Find people around you who are new to the church, are new believers, or have shown interest in getting involved.
- Look for people you think you can help to realize their potential.
- Ask God to send the right people to your group.

Where can I hold my Small Group?

We encourage Small Groups to meet outside the church building in places where you like to spend your time. Some of the most common meeting places are homes, restaurants, parks, coffee shops, and office buildings.

Where can I find Small Group curriculums?

We have a variety of curriculum options available to you to choose from. We have a library of on-hand curriculum studies as well as hundreds of curriculum options available through RightNow Media, mentioned in the available resources on the previous page.

Does my group have to meet weekly?

As much as possible, we encourage meeting weekly throughout the semester in order to build genuine relationships. If your work schedule does not allow for this possibility, collaborate with your Huddle Leader to discuss other possible solutions.

What should I do if someone asks a question I can't answer?

It's okay to not have all the answers. Thankfully, we can find guidance through prayer, God's Word, and the Holy Spirit. Encourage them to spend time reading the Bible and praying. Also, let them know that you will do your best to get some information and get back with them at your next Small Group meeting. Do some personal research and call your Huddle Leader to get advice.

How do I measure if group members are moving one step?

Ask! Make it part of your discussion whether in a group setting or individually. Here are some great questions to guide your conversation:

- How did you get connected to this Small Group?
- What are you most looking forward to in the group?
- Do you attend New City Church?
- What brought you to New City?
- Have you ever been part of a Small Group before?
- What do you feel like God has been doing in your life lately?
- Are you familiar with Grow Classes?
- What areas of your faith are you hoping to grow in the coming months?
- What are you focused on in your life right now?
- Have you been through the Discover Track? Do you remember what your personality type is or what your spiritual gifts are?
- Have you ever served on the New City Dream Team?
- How can I pray for you?

Everyone in your group will be at different places spiritually. The vision of helping them “move one step” is not to get them to do everything at once, it’s to help identify where they currently are spiritually and offer a practical next step to help them grow.

Here are some examples of next steps you can share depending where a group member is spiritually:

- Invite them to attend a Sunday service with you.
- Share your personal story and what God has been teaching you.
- Share how the Discover Track can help them discover their purpose and invite them to attend.

- Invite them to consider being water baptized. Invite your small Group to be there to celebrate anyone getting baptized.
- Share how you find time regularly to pray, worship, and read God's Word, and encourage them to make their own plan for time with God.
- Tell them about the New City mobile app and the daily Bible reading plan.
- If they are ready to receive Christ, offer to pray with them.
- Encourage them to learn more about areas like tithing, the Holy Spirit, prayer, and purpose by watching past messages on the mobile app or online at www.newcity.church.

What should I do if someone in my group shares something with me (or the group) that requires attention beyond what I (or we) can provide?

If you encounter a difficult situation within your Small Group, please know that you are not alone. If a member is going through a crisis, you can rally the group around them to provide prayer, encouragement, and support. Use wisdom and be sensitive to the situation. If you are unsure of what to do, don't hesitate to ask your Huddle Leader. Also, you and/or the group member can call the New City Church Office at (406) 727-4849, if needed.

How can I share stories of life change from the Small Group semester?

We love hearing about lives that are changed through Small Groups. You can share your stories with your Huddle Leader. If you, or someone in your group, would be willing to share part of your faith journey beyond your group, we would encourage you to share it in a New City Story (a video shown in a weekend service). You can write 'New City Story' on a Connect Card during the weekend services and our media team will contact you to set something up.

How do we handle childcare?

You are welcome to choose to offer childcare at your Small Group. Here are a few suggestions if considering childcare:

- Design an intergenerational small group.
Many groups are learning to successfully integrate children and adults into their small group model. By planning out the group time with the children in mind, the small group meeting IS the solution for the children that show up with their parents.
- Include children in an opening segment, or various segments, of the small group meeting.
Affirm the children's place in the group by involving them at the beginning of the meeting. You could open with an icebreaker question geared for the children that are present. You could play a short game or open with a worship song that they can sing. You could close the meeting with having kids involved in the prayer time. The more you make kids feel a part of the group, the more they will value it. Set aside time (20-30 minutes) for the adult discussion time and have kids playing in another room.
IMPORTANT: It's okay if parents periodically step out of the meeting to check on the kids; that's a normal part of family life!
- Offer an activity in another area for the children.
The resources available in the home of the meeting will determine which activities you can offer. Having a separate play room where kids can be apart from the meeting area is one option. Providing a movie for them is probably the simplest option. If the home has a backyard and/or basketball hoop, those can also be fun options for the children.
- Rotate supervision of the children each week.
Instead of putting the burden of supervision on one adult or on the spouse of the group host, organize a rotation schedule among the members of the group. Volunteering once or twice throughout the group semester to watch the children during a group meeting is a digest-able service for a person to commit to as part of the spiritual community. It is a best practice not to leave children alone with one adult.
- Trade childcare with another small group.
If your group meets on Sunday night and you know of another group that meets on Wednesday night, offer to watch their children for their group time in return for them to do the same for your group. This can also be setup on a rotation between the members of the two groups. This removes the onus of financial cost.

- Trade childcare with another couple.
Partner with another familiar couple and watch their kids when they're at small group and they can watch your kids when you're at small group.
- Have older kids watching younger ones.
Some groups may have parents with older teens that may be willing to volunteer their time to watch the children.
- Ask high school students from the church to provide childcare as a ministry project.
By partnering with the youth ministry, childcare for groups can be designated as a ministry project for the youth leaders. This allows young people to use their gifts to serve the body of the Christ. This option can also be used as a great opportunity to invest into the lives of the youth doing the childcare (sponsoring them to youth camp/events, periodically including them in your group activities, treating them not just as a babysitter solution but part of your small group).
- Arrange for babysitting as a group.
If there are a handful of families in the group with children, everyone could chip in resources to provide for babysitting. Dividing up the cost is much easier than paying it alone. Be generous when hiring a babysitter! You want them back. If you cheat them, word will spread. The rule of thumb among small groups has been at least \$5 per family.
- Have each family arrange for their own baby-sitting
Sometimes this is the best a small group host can offer and that's okay.

HELPFUL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

At New City Church we believe ministering through the Word of God is the most powerful way to care for people. As you pray over a small group member, try inserting that member's name in the Scripture to make it more personalized.

As a leader, we encourage you to find and memorize at least three Scriptures, which will equip you when you are walking someone through a tough situation, as well as give you strength as a leader throughout the semester.

Here is a list of powerful Scriptures that you can apply to any situation:

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

MARK 12:30-31 NKJV

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.

ISAIAH 55:8-9 NLT

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.

HEBREWS 11:1

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

1 JOHN 5:14-15

No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me," Says the Lord.

ISAIAH 54:17 NKJV

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.

EPHESIANS 6:10-28

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago

EPHESIANS 2:10 NLT

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

JEREMIAH 29:11

You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.

MATTHEW 5:14-16

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

JAMES 1:5

No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 8:39 NLT

Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.

ISAIAH 41:10 NLT

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

JAMES 1:2-4

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7

Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

PROVERBS 11:14 ESV

So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.

ROMANS 8:1-2 NLT

“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.

ISAIAH 1:18

