



Small Group Ministry

Koinonia Groups

OVERVIEW

In the Great Commission, Jesus commands his disciples to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:18-20). At Audubon Drive Bible Church (ADBC), we believe this mission is carried out by the local church. For this reason, our mission at ADBC is simple: “To be disciples and to make disciples” in order that, by God’s grace, we “may present everyone mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28). We recognize that discipleship or Christian maturity (also referred to as the Holy Spirit’s work of sanctification) is not an individual process, nor was it ever intended to be worked out in a vacuum (Phil. 2:1-13). Rather, in God’s perfect plan for the church, all believers are members of one body, and therefore, are dependent upon one another (1 Cor. 12).

We need consistent encouragement from each other in order to persevere in the faith and live lives characterized by love and obedience to Christ. To this end, the author of Hebrews exhorts us with great urgency, “Take care, brothers and sisters, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb. 3:12-13). Later, the author continues, “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near (Heb. 10:23-25).

PURPOSE

At ADBC, we believe the apex of our “meeting together” occurs each Lord’s Day as we gather to hear the Word, sing the Word, pray the Word, and preach the Word. Koinonia Groups (K-Groups) are not intended as a replacement for our Sunday worship. Nevertheless, we believe small groups are an excellent way to facilitate the mutual encouragement, care, and service that Scripture calls the local church body to practice toward one another. In other words, small groups are an opportunity for us to live out the various “one another” commands of the New Testament, with the goal to see the body nourished and built up in love and to provide a testimony to the world of our authentic discipleship in Christ (Eph. 4:11-16; John 13:35).

STRUCTURE

K-Groups will be comprised of 12-14 individuals (18+ years-old) who are committed to meeting regularly for fellowship, accountability, study, prayer, and service. Each group is designed to be demographically diverse, as individuals of different ages, backgrounds, and life stages gather around a common desire to live in biblical community, develop Christ-honoring friendships, and grow together in their love for Christ and for one another. Each group study will follow the current ADBC preaching series; the pastoral staff will compose applicational questions from the previous week’s sermon to allow for greater depth in knowing and applying God’s Word. Because the small group ministry is intended primarily to help our members provide biblical care and encouragement for one another, K-Groups will be restricted to those who are either members of ADBC or who are pursuing membership at ADBC. ADBC will provide an option for childcare at the church.

SCHEDULE & COMMITMENT

One of the greatest hindrances to a successful small group is irregular attendance and participation. Our desire and ability to effectively love one another and minister to one another outside of the formal meeting times will be directly proportional to the depth of our relationships. As a result, we ask that you place a high priority on both attending and actively participating in your K-Group. Specifically, we want to make you aware of the following time commitments for K-Groups:

- Groups will meet on a designated evening every-other-week throughout the month. Each group will meet in the home of a church member who is strategically located throughout the areas most populated by members of ADBC. Our desire is that no individual will be deterred from joining a K-Group because of driving distance.
- During the fall, groups will officially begin meeting in September and will continue meeting every-other-week through the middle of December. All groups will take a break for the remainder of December and all of January.
- During the spring, groups will officially reconvene in February and will continue meeting every-other-week through the middle of May. All groups will take a break during the summer months of June through August.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about K-Groups, please contact Tyler Clark (479-221-8047; tylerclark@audubonchurch.org).

Living the “One Another” Life: Ten Reasons to Join a Small Group

by John Kimbell

(Pastor of Preaching and Discipleship at Clifton Baptist Church)

1. **Ephesians 4:11-16** – Having been equipped for the work of service by leaders in the church, every single member has a responsibility for building up the local body of which they are a part. “The whole body...causes the growth of the body” (4:16)! Although this can certainly take place in large, corporate gatherings, small groups provide unique opportunities where “each individual part” can actively pursue building fellow believers up in love.
2. **Hebrews 3:12-14** – Perseverance in faith is a community project! The Scripture tells us that those who are saved must keep their faith until the end of their lives. This passage prescribes the antidote to an unbelieving heart – encouraging one another! Regular encouragement is necessary to maintain a right relationship with God and to avoid becoming hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.
3. **Hebrews 10:24-25** – The author of Hebrews tells us that in order to live lives characterized by love and good deeds we must meet together regularly and stir one another up to such actions. As the day of Christ’s return draws nearer, such meetings become more important, not less.
4. **Galatians 6:2** – We fulfill the law of Christ by bearing one another’s burdens. This can only be fully accomplished in the context of committed, trusting relationships. The small group atmosphere is a great place for such relationships to be built and for the actual, practical work of sharing the burdens of others to be carried out.
5. **1 John 1:6-7** – Sin is most powerful when it remains concealed in a person’s life. A small group provides the accountability and safe haven where we can “walk in the light,” that is, we can be open and honest about our personal struggles and find encouragement in our pursuit of holiness. As we do this we discover genuine fellowship with one another.
6. **James 5:19-20/Galatians 6:1** – In His grace, God uses faithful friends to address sins in our lives that we do not perceive on our own. Although correction is not easy or comfortable, it is a critical responsibility given to us by God when we see a fellow believer living in sin. When we are living out devoted and deep relationships with one another, we have occasion to perceive such sin and the best context in which to deliver humble and loving correction.
7. **1 Corinthians 12:7-25/1 Peter 4:10** – Every member of the body of Christ has unique gifts and abilities that are necessary for the existence and building up of the church. Although not everyone can have a high profile position of leadership, all believers are called to actively use their gifts to serve the body. For many people, small groups are a natural place both to discover and put these personal gifts to use in order to bless others.
8. **1 Peter 4:9** – Peter exhorts us to be hospitable to one another. Meeting in small groups in various homes and other places outside our large church building provides unique opportunities to practice hospitality.
9. **John 13:34-35** – Through an ongoing commitment to one another, genuine love is nurtured and demonstrated for all the world to see. By our love, we will be recognized as true followers of Jesus and by God’s grace others may be drawn to join in our joy! In this way, small groups have great potential for attracting new people to the fellowship of the church!
10. **Matthew 28:18-20** – The task of witnessing can be greatly promoted when members think and pray and act together to creatively reach the lost. A small group can be a great vehicle for finding natural opportunities to work together to share the gospel of Jesus Christ, draw people into the fellowship of the church, and grow new believers into maturity.

“One Another” Commands

Sovereign Grace Ministries

1. Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50)
2. Love one another (John 13:34)
3. Be joined to one another (Rom. 12:5)
4. Be devoted to one another (Rom. 12:10)
5. Honor one another (Rom. 12:10)
6. Rejoice with one another (Rom. 12:15)
7. Weep with one another (Rom. 12:15)
8. Live in harmony with one another (Rom. 12:16)
9. Accept one another (Rom. 15:7)
10. Counsel one another (Rom. 15:14)
11. Greet one another (Rom. 16:16)
12. Agree with each other (1 Cor. 1:10)
13. Wait for one another (1 Cor. 11:33)
14. Care for one another (1 Cor. 12:25)
15. Serve one another (Gal. 5:13)
16. Carry one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)
17. Be kind to one another (Eph. 4:32)
18. Forgive one another (Eph. 4:32)
19. Submit to one another (Eph. 5:21)
20. Bear with one another (Col. 3:13)
21. Teach, admonish each other (Col. 3:16)
22. Encourage one another (1 Thess. 5:11)
23. Build up one another (1 Thess. 5:11)
24. Spur one another on (Heb. 10:24)
25. Offer hospitality to one another (1 Pet. 4:9)
26. Minister gifts to one another (1 Pet. 4:10)
27. Be humble toward one another (1 Pet. 5:5)
28. Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16)
29. Pray for one another (James 5:16)
30. Fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7)

Cultivating Fellowship

by Donald S. Whitney

(Professor of Biblical Spirituality at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary)

The word *fellowship* in the New Testament (as in Acts 2:42) is a translation of the Greek word *koinonia*. At its root *koinonia* describes two or more people in close association and often speaks of these people as sharing in something, such as a marriage or business. Christian *koinonia* exists between everyone who knows God through Jesus Christ (see 1 John 1:3). Everyone united with Christ by faith is also united with everyone else united with Christ. The same Holy Spirit indwells all believers and gives each a common share in the body of Christ, the church. As the apostle Paul put it, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body . . . and all have been made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

The presence of the Holy Spirit in each other enables Christian relationships to be enriched with a supernatural dimension and spiritual dynamic that unbelievers cannot experience. For example, the Lord Himself blesses us through the words of other Spirit-indwelled people in ways He seldom does through Spirit-less people. The easiest and most direct way to experience these blessings of *koinonia* is just to talk with another believer about the things of God. This includes anything related to knowing God, Christian living, understanding the Bible, and applying the Bible to particular issues such as work or family or culture, prayer, theology, church, and evangelism.

But as normal as such fellowship should be to those who know Christ, if we don't cultivate it, *koinonia* gets choked out of our conversations by the weeds of words about other things. Many Christians seem almost as reluctant to initiate a discussion about spiritual things with another believer as they are with an unbeliever. Just as we often do with unbelievers, we suppose, "They don't want to talk about God now," or "They'll think I'm weird," or "They'll think I'm trying to be super-spiritual." So we sigh and chat of other things instead, even though our hearts ache for more satisfying interaction with our Christian brothers and sisters.

One simple way to cultivate *koinonia* is to ask questions designed to turn a conversation in a more spiritual direction. Here's a list to work from:

- How is your [teaching, hospitality, outreach, deacon, or whatever] ministry going? What do you enjoy most about it?
- Where have you seen the Lord at work lately?
- What's the Lord been teaching you recently?
- Have you had any evangelistic opportunities lately?
- Have you had any obvious answers to prayer recently?
- What have you been reading? How has it impressed you?
- Where in the Bible have you been reading lately? What impact has it had on you?
- How can I pray for you?
- What's the growth point in your life right now?
- What are you passionate about right now?

You may want to write these down and put the list in your daily planner or your wallet, or enter them into a file to access electronically. You may prefer to develop other questions of your own. But don't wait for someone else to initiate *koinonia*—be prepared to cultivate it.