

## **Mission, Vision, Purpose, and Values of Groups**

### **Groups Mission:**

- We exist to make Jesus Known.

### **Vision of Groups: Why is this important?**

- Groups do this by loving people towards Jesus, leading them from where they are to where God wants them to be.
- We believe that when people commit to growing in their relationship with Christ in the context of a spiritual community, it is the most effective way to develop their faith. We all mature best when we strive to do so with others.
- Living out the Christian faith without leaning on Christian Friends is hard. Firm commitments and convictions aren't enough; the Christian life requires strong connections.

### **Purpose of Groups:**

- **Build Relationships:**
  - We value personal relationships that are authentic and rich with love for one another. Because people are made for life-giving relationships, we will create environments that nurture meaningful human connections. (Acts 2:42-47, 1 John 1:6-8, Hebrews 10:25)
- **Spiritual Growth:**
  - We value spiritual growth that activates faith in Jesus. Because God has called us to mature fully in our faith, we will create the following steps to encourage spiritual formation for all. (Ephesians 4:12-13, Colossians 1:28, 2 Peter 3:18)
- **Reaching out:**
  - We value reaching out to those in need, far from God and lost. Because of this, we believe that groups should naturally be invitational. Invitational groups are always open and actively seeking new members to share the life-giving community that they have found. Current groups develop, train, and launch new group leaders from their existing groups. These groups also strongly desire to serve together to advance God's Kingdom. Because Jesus is the way to know God, we want groups to lead people to saving faith in Him. (2 Corinthians 5:20, Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 15)

## **Types of Groups:**

- **Life Groups:**
  - On-going groups that primarily meet in the homes of hosts, usually meeting weekly but often meeting bi-weekly; often organized by age and stage of life; curriculum coincides with sermon discussion guides but can also be chosen by the groups themselves and can include topical studies, books of the bible studies and other studies found on RightNow Media.
- **Growth Groups:**
  - Groups that meet for a specific study area usually for a set limited time. These studies can be topical but often include bible studies. Examples include Men and Women's Ministry and Study Groups, SOAP studies, foundation classes, and Discipleship Groups.
- **Recovery Groups:**
  - Groups can meet on an ongoing basis or for a set period and are typically focused on healing and recovery from hurts and hang-ups. Examples include GriefShare, DivorceCare, Integrity Groups, Recovery Groups, and more.

## **Group Values:**

- **Safe Environment:**
  - Groups will create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. Group members and leaders will offer no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.
- **Confidential:**
  - Group members believe that everything heard and shared in their group is confidential. Nothing goes outside our group without the consent of the person who has shared unless they are in danger to themselves or engaged in illegal activity.
- **Spiritual Health:**
  - Group members will provide grace while maintaining accountability as they pursue a healthy spiritual life that honors God.
- **Attendance:**
  - Group members will prioritize and keep attendance for group meetings and communicate with our leaders when they cannot make it.

## **Role of Group Leaders and Hosts:**

*The primary role of the Group Leader or Host is to manage the physical, relational, and spiritual environment of the group. They will do this while maintaining and ensuring their group will fit nicely into the mission, vision, values, and purpose of groups at Northview.*

- **Physical Environment:**
  - Show hospitality, create a welcoming environment, eliminate distractions, and consider the needs of your group members.
- **Relational Environment:**
  - Provide a positive, encouraging, friendly, and loving atmosphere; set the tone for being open, honest, and authentic; lead well through conflict and disagreement. The goal is unity and consensus; expect things sometimes to be messy or imperfect, and know that is okay.
- **Spiritual Environment:**
  - Keep the group focused on God and growing in faith; focus on where God is working in your lives; have a healthy balance of knowledge and application; groups that serve together stay together; get to know the spiritual maturity of your group so that you can shepherd them well; pray together!

## **Guidelines and Ground Rules for Groups:**

- 1) Show up. If you can't make it, please let your leader know.
- 2) This is a safe place where everyone can be authentic, open, and honest about their perspectives and experiences. But what is said in a group should remain confidential unless otherwise stated or a person is in danger to themselves or others or engaged in illegal activity.
- 3) Be an excellent, active listener. Try to avoid thinking about what you are going to say when others are speaking.
- 4) Be sensitive about the amount of time you are sharing and speaking. We want to encourage dialogue and participation from everyone. Do not dominate the discussion.
- 5) No Fixing or Rescuing. When people share something personal, don't offer condolences, interrupt, or provide ways to solve or fix anything. Again, be an excellent, active, and supportive listener.
- 6) Silence is okay; it allows others to share and gives people time to think, pause, and reflect.
- 7) Be self-aware of how you affect the group through your words, actions, and nonverbal communication.
- 8) Everyone is encouraged to speak up and participate, but no one will make you talk if you don't want to. But you will only get out of this group what you put into it.
- 9) No politics, sales, or inflammatory language. You are in the wrong place if you are looking for a debate or a community to sell to. This is a positive and encouraging community where we encourage unity in Christ.
- 10) Pray together! Share your burdens and allow others to intercede on your behalf.