

FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF GOD

PRAYER/WORSHIP

MISSION/SERVICE

East Cooper Baptist:

# COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERSHIP GUIDE



*"... for the purpose of applying the Word of God and building relationships that intentionally encourage the passionate pursuit of Christ and the advancement of His Kingdom."*



**They devoted themselves  
to the apostles' teaching  
and to the fellowship, to  
the breaking of bread and  
to prayer. Acts 2:42**

# Community Groups: a Definition and Value

A Community Group is an intentional and regular gathering of ideally 6-18 people for the purpose of applying the Word of God and building Bible-centered relationships that encourage the pursuit of Christ and the advancement of his Kingdom.

*Community groups help us accomplish the church's primary mission which is to "Equip people to pursue Jesus Christ passionately as they impact the culture."*

## The Value of Community Groups

### **Love**

To display a commitment to others in the group, both by words and actions, placing the needs of others before my own. (John 13:34, Philippians 2:3, 4)

### **The Authority of Scripture**

To embrace the Bible as the trustworthy basis for our faith and life. It is the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

### **Prayer**

To commit to pray for others in the group. (Matthew 18:20)

### **Ministry**

To share the workload in the ministry to the group and the church body. Ministry is the action by which God works through His people. (Ephesians 4: 12-16)

### **Spiritual Health**

To walk more deeply with Christ by investing time, thought and prayer, and to encourage others as they follow Christ. (Colossians 2:6)

### **Attendance**

To meet together as a group regularly and faithfully. To be on time or let someone know if we will not be there. (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

### **Confidentiality**

To keep prayer concerns and challenges fully confidential, unless explicit permission is given to involve others as part of the solution. (Ephesians 4:29)

### **Authenticity**

To be transparent, as we share with one another, recognizing that we are all dependent upon God's grace. And, at the same time, practicing appropriate discretion in the context of the group. (James 5:16)

### **Unity**

To resolve any ongoing conflict with another individual according to the plan described in Matthew 18:15-17; by first going to the individual who has offended in order to reconcile the relationship.

### **Multiplication**

To work with the leader, as the small group grows, to multiply as God provides more people and leadership, ideally within 2 to 3 years. (2 Timothy 2:2)

# What Makes a Community Group?

## Community Group Dynamics

1. The BIBLE is opened at every meeting. It is the guide to our thinking and opinions.
2. There is PRAYER at every meeting.
3. There is TALK ABOUT JESUS at every meeting.
4. GROUP DISCUSSION happens at every meeting.
5. LISTENING AND RESPONDING TO THE HOLY SPIRIT, applying what we have heard to our lives after every meeting.

## The Four Components of a Community Group Acts 2:42-47

*“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”*

F \_\_\_\_\_

W \_\_\_\_\_

P \_\_\_\_\_

M \_\_\_\_\_

## The Importance of Balance

FELLOWSHIP: If present, the group is **genuine** and **close**. If NOT present, it will be shallow and sterile.

THE WORD: If present there is **growth**. If NOT present, the group will become stagnant.

PRAYER/WORSHIP: If present, the group is **God-centered**. If NOT, the group will be man-centered.

MISSION/SERVICE: If present, the group is **challenged** and **excited**. If NOT, the group will grow inward.

# What Makes a Community Group?

## Types of Community Groups by Focus



A special focus on the **Word/Bible study**



A special focus on **Prayer/Worship**



A special focus on **Mission/Service/Outreach**



A balance of all four ingredients.

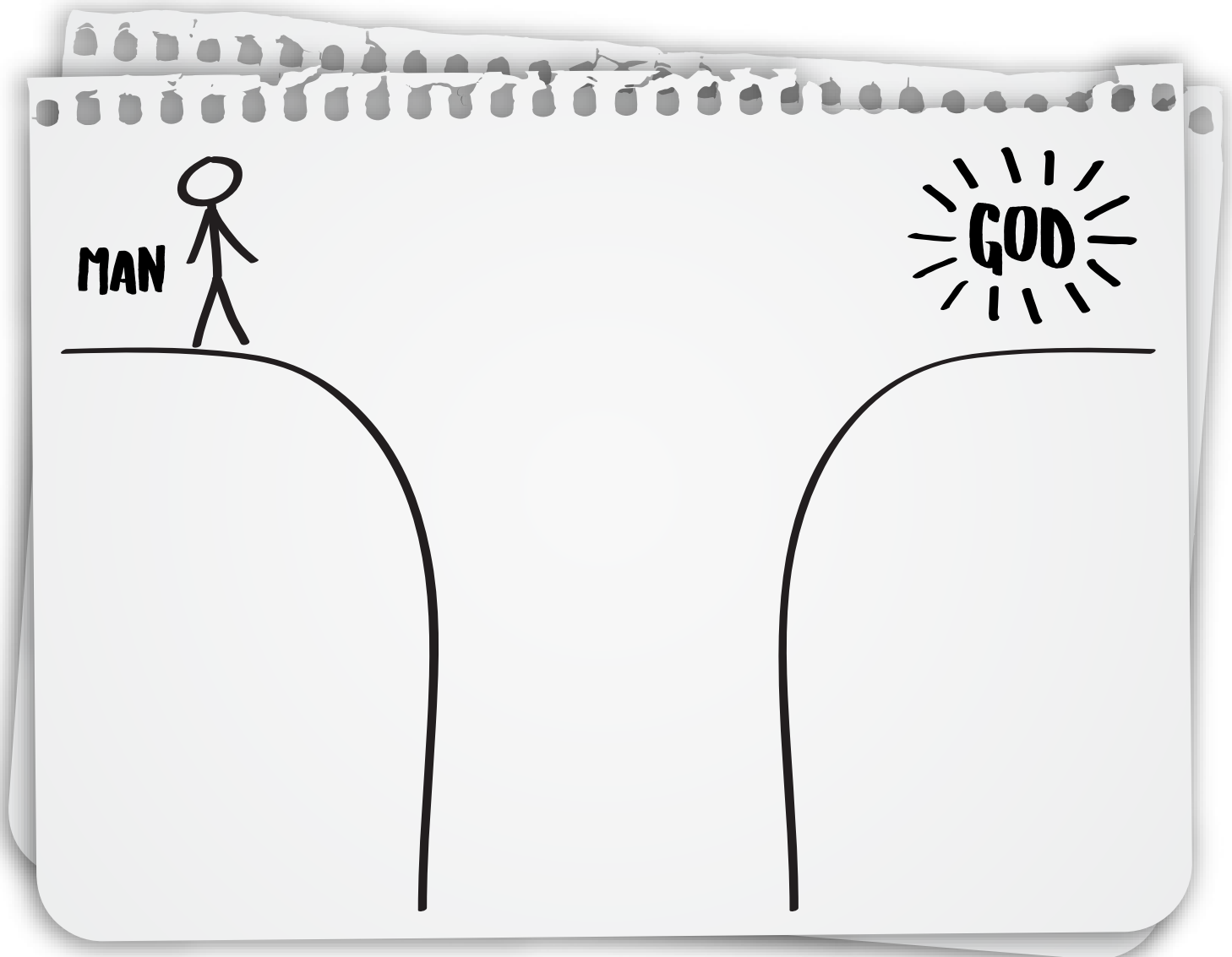
## Healthy Signs of Community Group Growth and Service

1. Every two to three years, the ideal growth of a Community Group results in 1 **multiplication** - the formation of a new, additional community group.
2. Every year, group members have shared Christ's love with co-workers, neighbors, family and/or friends, resulting in 2 **people within their circle placing their faith in Christ**.
3. Every semester, your group has participated in 3 **service projects or outreach events**.

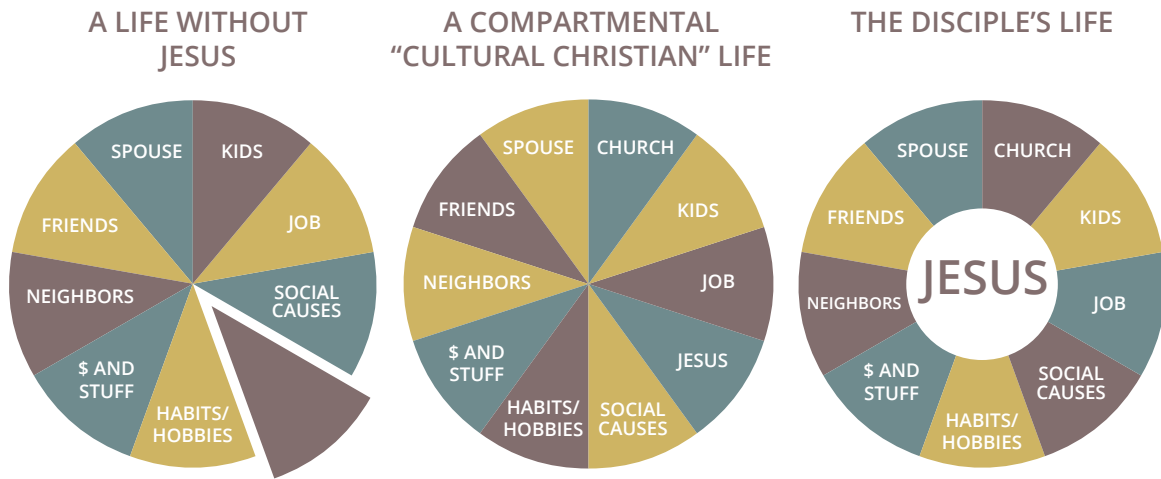
# The Gospel

**“The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

**Romans 6:23**



# The Life of a Disciple



## Disciple-Making = Intentional Multiplication

*Reproduction is a mark of obedience.*

*Not performance based acceptance but rather acceptance based performance.*

*Matthew 28:16-20*

*2 Timothy 2:2*

*Ephesians 4:11-16*



# Facts Every Community Group Leader Should Know

- 01 / Groups should be open groups—always making room for one more. Community Groups are allowed to close for a season if that closure is part of an intentional process, and a plan for multiplication is in place.
- 02 / We offer both on-campus and off-campus groups.
- 03 / Most groups meet on a weekly basis, usually for an hour and a half. Off-campus groups usually meet longer than that and may include a meal.
- 04 / Curriculum for Community Group Study can come from 3 sources:
  - a. Right Now Media.
  - b. Community Group Study Curriculum List.
  - c. ECBC Sermons.
- 05 / Childcare is offered for on-campus groups. Off-campus groups offer childcare in various ways and the church offers limited reimbursement for childcare expenses for groups. Often, group members rotate serving in childcare for group meetings off campus.
- 06 / Groups are asked to be strategic and multiply every two to three years. This process can look very different for each group.
- 07 / Developing spiritual disciplines and accountability is to be an important factor in community group life.
- 08 / Size is important to a healthy Community Group. When a group can no longer sit in a circle and look one another in the eye, it is no longer a “small group”.
- 09 / Groups meet most of the year, taking a three-week break during Christmas and a 2-3 month break during the summer. However, they stay connected through several events and socials.
- 10 / The Community Group leader should intentionally shepherd the group to accomplish its mission. We encourage our Community Group leaders to see themselves as leaders— not just teachers who share information about the Bible, and not just facilitators who only lead discussion. Community Group leaders are disciple makers who accept responsibility for leading spiritual growth of the people in their group. Creating environment that fosters growth is critical.



# Facts Every Community Group Leader Should Know

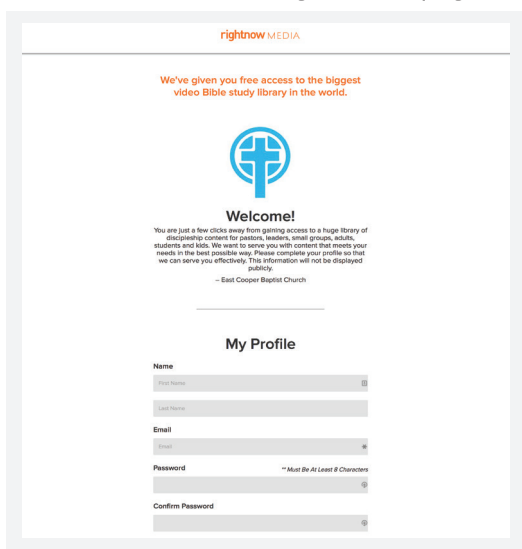
- 11** / A group leader should enlist others in the group to lead specific components of group life, such as co-leaders, someone to record and disseminate prayer requests, someone to coordinate outreach activity, someone to coordinate service projects, and someone to plan fellowship gatherings for the group.
- 12** / The Community Group Pastor and the Shepherding Elders will build relationships with CG leaders, encourage the leader spiritually, and assist with spiritual issues that arise within the group.
- 13** / People seeking a Community Group have the following options:
  - a. Viewing an online group finder
  - b. Visiting the Community Group kiosk in the Welcome Center for a list of open groups
  - c. Be a part of Engagement Sunday.
- 14** / Anyone (ECBC member or not) is welcome to participate in a Community Group. However, we believe groups thrive best when only adults are involved.
- 15** / Some specialty groups are offered, such as: Divorce Care, Adoption, and other support groups.
- 16** / The enlistment process for new group leaders includes an application and an interview process. This process helps establish a relationship between the church and the Community Group staff.
- 17** / Prospective leaders must be a member of ECBC and agree to: church doctrinal statements, a deacon expectation document, and our statement on not serving or offering alcohol at church events.
- 18** / Community Group leaders are encouraged to develop leaders within, but we also conduct interest meetings for potential Community Group leaders.
- 19** / All Community Group Leaders are encouraged to attend the monthly prayer meeting at ECBC.
- 20** / CG Leader e-News will be sent regularly to your inbox containing training tips, surveys, highlights and additional information.

# Resources & Study Materials

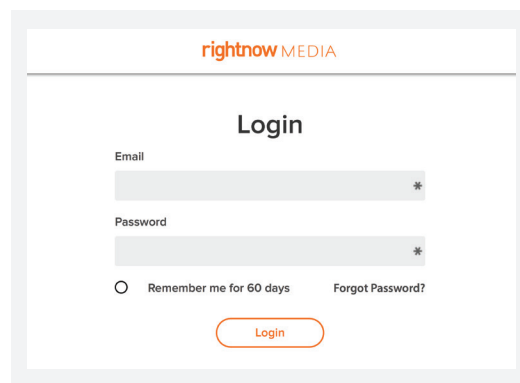
## rightnow MEDIA

If you would like to utilize rightnow MEDIA as your Community Group's study resource, here's a Quick Start guide to get going.

- 1 Simply go to the RightNow Media page on our website under Resources.  
[eastcooperbaptist.com/rightnowmedia](http://eastcooperbaptist.com/rightnowmedia)
- 2 Click the **GET STARTED** button and you will be taken to the registration page.
- 3 Create your profile, enter a password and you are ready to go. It's that simple!
- 4 Next time you log in, enter the email and password you used to register-then explore!



The screenshot shows the registration page for rightnow MEDIA. At the top, it says "rightnow MEDIA" and "We've given you free access to the biggest video Bible study library in the world." Below this is a blue cross logo and a "Welcome!" message. The message states: "You are just a few clicks away from gaining access to a huge library of discipleship content for pastors, leaders, small groups, adults, students and kids. We want to serve you with content that meets your needs in the best possible way. Please complete your profile so that we can serve you effectively. This information will not be displayed publicly." Below the message is a "My Profile" section with input fields for Name, Last Name, Email, Password, and Confirm Password. The Password field has a note: "\*\*Must Be At Least 8 Characters".



The screenshot shows the login page for rightnow MEDIA. At the top, it says "rightnow MEDIA" and "Login". Below this are input fields for Email and Password. There are also checkboxes for "Remember me for 60 days" and "Forgot Password?". At the bottom is a "Login" button.

Once enrolled and logged-in to your rightnow MEDIA account, follow these steps to find the ECBC Community Group Bible Studies:

1. Visit RightNowMedia.org and Log-in
2. Under LIBRARIES on the left side of the page, click on EAST COOPER BAPTIST CHURCH
3. Scroll down to and click on COMMUNITY GROUP BIBLE STUDIES.

Here is the direct link: [www.rightnow.org/Content/CustomChannel/18357](http://www.rightnow.org/Content/CustomChannel/18357)

## Study Curriculum List

This long list of books and studies has been reviewed and approved specifically for Community Group Leaders. This can be found in the Leader Resource Section of our website.

## ECBC Sunday Sermons

You have the option to take the Sunday sermon and go deeper. Helpful suggestions for studying the sermon are found on the ECBC website.

# Shepherding Resources

## **Financial Needs**

ECBC's benevolence committee offers support to church members and non-members if sponsored by a member. Financial coaches are also available to help individuals or families get their finances in order. Contact Carl Schooling at [carls@eastcooperbaptistchurch.com](mailto:carls@eastcooperbaptistchurch.com).

## **Grief**

Our 'GriefShare' class helps hurting individuals deal with the pain of loss. The 13-week course is offered each Sunday Morning during the Spring and Fall. Contact Carl Schooling for details about the next scheduled class at [carls@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:carls@eastcooperbaptist.com).

## **Pregnancy Needs**

The Lowcountry Pregnancy Center provides counseling, supplies, programs, and medical care to those in unplanned pregnancy situations. Call the Lowcountry Pregnancy Center at 843-553-3505 or email [info@lowcountrypregnancycenter.com](mailto:info@lowcountrypregnancycenter.com).

## **Re|engage, Marriage, and Family Counseling**

- Re|engage is a marriage enrichment program that any couple can join at any time, no matter what condition their marriage is in. For more information contact Travis & Allison Nash: [tdnash@yahoo.com](mailto:tdnash@yahoo.com) or [scallinash@aim.com](mailto:scallinash@aim.com)
- For counseling appointments, contact Carl Schooling, or Rose Anderson for counseling specifically for women. [carls@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:carls@eastcooperbaptist.com) or [rosea@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:rosea@eastcooperbaptist.com)
- Additionally, Lowcountry Biblical Counseling Center is a ministry of licensed Biblical counselors offering support and counseling to those in need. Contact them at 843-278-0072 or [info@lcbcc.org](mailto:info@lcbcc.org)

## **People Struggling with Life**

Our Stephen Ministry volunteers are trained and willing to come alongside people who are struggling and need one-on-one care. Contact Carl Schooling for more information, [carls@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:carls@eastcooperbaptist.com).

## **Extreme Emotional Needs/Suicide**

Lowcountry Biblical Counseling Center has an intensive Biblical counseling program for those facing extreme emotional needs. Call 843-278-0072 or [info@lcbcc.org](mailto:info@lcbcc.org).

In an Emergency dial 2-1-1, to reach the Trident United Way Hotline. Other phone numbers are:

North Charleston Hotline: 843-744-4357

Teen Help Line: 843-747-TEEN(8336)

SC Toll Free: 1-800-922-2283

SC Teen Toll Free: 1-800-273-8255

## **Infertility**

Hannah's Heart is a ministry of prayer for those facing infertility. For more information contact Rebecca Dorrity at [rthomas224@yahoo.com](mailto:rthomas224@yahoo.com).

## **Furniture**

If someone is in significant need or a crisis situation and needs furniture, contact Bob Tennyson at 843-697-0996, or [bob11954@comcast.net](mailto:bob11954@comcast.net)

## **Unemployment**

ReStart is a ministry for the unemployed, under-employed & people in career transition, providing powerful tools to enhance their search for job. Contact Brad Reed at 843-697-1297 or [bwreed58@bellsouth.net](mailto:bwreed58@bellsouth.net)

# Managing the Information

Your existing church account (InFellowship) allows for easy record-keeping, and contains a list of your members and their contact information.

## How to use InFellowship for Community Groups:

1. Visit [eastcooperbaptist.com](http://eastcooperbaptist.com)
2. Scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on "My Account"
3. Sign-in and click on "Your Groups"
4. Click Community Group Span of Care/Your Group Name... Here is your main CG page

### WHAT WILL YOU FIND? FOUR HELPFUL TABS:

- 1) Dashboard Tab
  - View the information the church publishes. Is this info current? If not, please contact Carol Whiting [carolw@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:carolw@eastcooperbaptist.com) to update.
  - Look at the ACTIONS column on the right. You can e-mail your group, and invite and manage communications with new people right here.
- 2) Roster Tab
  - Your list of group members, their e-mail address and phone numbers. Is this info current? If not, please contact Carol Whiting [carolw@eastcooperbaptist.com](mailto:carolw@eastcooperbaptist.com) to ADD/DELETE group members. (We'll need name, date of birth, and street and e-mail addresses.)
  - Look at the ACTIONS column on the right. You can view the prospects you've invited through your InFellowship page. You can also download your members' contact information.
- 3) Attendance Tab
  - This is where you will enter attendance after each meeting. Look at the top right side of the page: '+Enter attendance' link highlighted on the far left. Click and then select a date/time for the meeting you are recording.
  - You can also keep track of any group comments or prayer requests here.
  - The graph shows you how your attendance is trending. You can look at 3, 6, 9 or 12 month period by using the drop down menu on the top left side of the page.
- 4) Prospects Tab
  - You can invite and view the progress of any person you have contacted using your InFellowship page.

# The Hows & Whys of Recording Attendance

## ATTENDANCE: HOW?

The morning after your meeting, Fellowship 1 will auto-send you an e-mail to remind you to record attendance. It will appear in your inbox as “e-mail” being sent to you from [e-mail@fellowshipone.com](mailto:e-mail@fellowshipone.com)

Open the link and click the box next to each name of those who attended. This process takes less than a few minutes.

## ATTENDANCE: WHY?

Keeping attendance online is important for many reasons. It's not just about the keeping track of numbers.

### **Attendance is part of shepherding your CG flock.**

Not everyone can make every meeting, but recording attendance will help you keep track of who may be falling away or who you can count on to always be on hand to help. If someone has been missing from your group for more than a couple of occasions without notice, maybe there is a need or a life-challenge. Maybe they've been sick or have a family situation that could use your support or words of Truth.

**“The action of recording attendance takes less than a few minutes.”**

**Attendance records are viewed** by a shepherding network of Elders, to help them reach out to those who may be on your roster, but never attend, and haven't moved to another group. Shepherding Elders can offer encouragement and hopefully bring them back into community with others.

**Attendance records show growth trends.** The ECBC Community Group Pastor keeps up with CG growth as a whole, looks for trends, seasonal changes and member involvement. Attendance is reported twice annually to our governing Elders.

## AFTER THE MEETING: AT A GLANCE

*After every group meeting, practice these steps to make your group the best it can be:*

1. Enter Attendance.
2. Follow-up with absentees.
3. Follow-up with any guests.
4. Send prayer requests to the group.
5. Mark your calendar with date-specific prayer requests, so you can follow-up.

# Community Group Expectations

## LEADERS:

- I agree to lead my Community Group by example as a growing, devoted Christian with a lifestyle that is Christ honoring.
- I agree to love, lead, and provide Biblical counsel to the people of my Community Group with a shepherd's heart.
- I agree to take the responsibility of leading and facilitating a regularly scheduled Community Group meeting, ideally on a weekly basis.
- I will strive to identify and train an apprentice in my Community Group who can assist with group meeting facilitation and prepare to be a future Community Group Leader.
- I am willing to cultivate a vision and spirit within our group for adding new people to the group and reproducing ourselves by forming a new group when we find that we are too big for effective small group dynamics and the lack of space inhibits growth.
- I agree to attend leader training meetings, read the CG leader e-news, respond to leader surveys in order to pray and care for the flock at ECBC and to be equipped for leading spiritually.
- I will make personal daily devotions, church attendance, Community Group attendance and giving a priority.
- I am in agreement with and support the mission and values of ECBC, the Southern Baptist Faith and Message, and the Leader's responsibilities as outlined in the Community Group Leader's training booklet.
- I agree not to serve alcohol at church events, as to avoid becoming a stumbling block to weaker members.
- I am committed to maintain unity in my Community Group.
- I am committed to pray for my Community Group.
- I will contact a Pastor or Shepherding Elder when I am in need of prayer support and/or have a difficult situation in my Community Group.
- I will be the catalyst for identifying community outreach and missional service opportunities for our Community Group.

## MEMBERS:

### What is involved in a Community Group:

- A desire to become a self-feeding Christian in prayer, accountable fellowship, the Word and your witness.
- A willingness to come regularly to meetings of the small group and to contact your leader(s) tell him you will be absent.
- A commitment to be on time.
- A goal of completing any pre-assigned lesson before the meeting.
- A willingness to place yourself inside the sphere of mutual accountability within the context of the loving relationships that the group provides.

**Community groups help us accomplish the church's primary mission which is to "Equip people to pursue Jesus Christ passionately as they impact the culture."**

# CONTACT

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[eastcooperbaptist.com/cgresources](http://eastcooperbaptist.com/cgresources)

