

CBC GROUP MINISTRY

Coats Baptist is a gospel-centered community serving together on mission to make and multiply disciples of all nations. We believe that every Christian is to grow in Christ as a disciple, and to help others become and grow as disciples as well. It is our desire that every ministry of the Church be a great commission ministry. Nowhere is this truer than in group ministry.

Group ministry, including Sunday School, is the backbone of Church life. Small groups are essential for effective ministry because they focus on biblical instruction and help disciples grow to become more like Christ. In addition, they are the first level of care for members.

But how do we do small groups in today's circumstances?

Tips & Suggestions:

- Consider meeting in individual homes. Discuss personal safety measures in advance so that no one is surprised or offended.
- Keep in touch. Because of the duration of our time apart, it is possible that efforts to stay in touch have waned. Be intentional about staying connected.
- Use technology to your advantage. Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook live, and other venues have made virtual gatherings easier than what could have been imagined even just a few years ago. Some members may not have experience with these platforms, but perhaps this is an opportunity to teach or learn some new tricks. Others may not have the technology available. Be patient. Consider inviting them to participate with you.
- Manage time efficiently. Perhaps your time together is limited. Consider ways to best use the time: have group members read the Scripture and/or lesson before your meeting, for example, or send prayer requests ahead of time and add them to a shared online document.
- Remember why you're meeting:
 - To grow closer to Jesus through Bible study and prayer.
 - To support each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Fellowship goes beyond socializing. Fellowship is intentional, for the purpose of discipleship.
 - To care for the body of Christ. Who knows and can care for the members of the body better than those with whom we do life?

General Reminders:

- Small groups can be an excellent outreach opportunity. As such, they can be evangelistic. They can also create an easy entrance to the Church itself. Folks may be comfortable attending a small group, but not entering the Church for corporate worship.
- Small groups can meet any time: they don't have to meet at 9:45 on Sunday morning.



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- Small groups can meet any place: they don't have to meet in the Church building. Keep in mind a few pros and cons to meeting in public, such as at a local diner:
 - You create a public witness and others may wish to join.
 - Sharing personal concerns, accountability requests, or items for prayer may not be as easy in a public setting.
 - If you meet in a public setting, always be considerate of others. Seating may be limited; don't prevent others from the opportunity. And, please, be kind to wait staff and tip well. Remember: you represent Jesus and His Church.
- If you have previously been meeting at Church and feel that it would benefit your group to move off-site or change time, please know that we can help and support you in that decision. Let us know your plans.
- Sharing prayer concerns should include, but go well beyond, the sharing of physical illnesses. Be willing to share doubts, fears, confusion, and personal struggles. Pray for those who need salvation. But be careful: don't use prayer requests as a cover for gossip.
- Group ministry should provide a level of accountability. Ask those in your group to hold you accountable. Be honest about your struggles; most likely, you're not alone.
- Small groups are the catalyst for the Church "doing life together." In community, we learn, pray, serve, and grow together. We are the body of Christ.
- Small groups can be a Kingdom outpost. Group ministry allows the Church to grow *in* community while being scattered *among* the community.
- Even after we are more free to meet in person, continue to leverage existing resources to reach others. We don't have to abandon what we've learned just because we learned it during a difficult time.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your small group. Are the members of your group growing spiritually? Do they know how to study the Bible better because of their participation in the group? Do they actually study the Bible? Do they actually pray? Do they share the gospel with others? Are they helping others grow?

Group ministry has always been central to discipleship. It is now becoming even more critical. Group ministry is about Kingdom advancement: this is life on mission!

For more information or supporting resources, please contact jimmy@coatsbaptist.com or call: (910) 897-5173.

