



## What is a Community Group at SPCC?

Community groups are created to be stable communities of belonging where the lives of those in the community partner in God's mission of reconciliation and restoration.

Stanley Park Community Church is a "community of communities." Being in a community group is one of the three legs of what following Jesus looks like at Stanley Park. The three legs are; personal devotional life, intentional small group, and larger collective gatherings. All three of these are critical for faith and growth. Being a part of a community group is to join with others to grow in the knowledge, likeness, and lifestyle of Jesus through authenticity and openness. This growth happens through connection, support, and encouragement of each other as you walk with Jesus. While our leaders play a pivotal role, each person in the group also plays a part in facilitating a sense of belonging for all, from the oldest to the youngest. The more a community group is together sharing life and exploring what following Jesus means in our everyday life, the greater the community, and the more meaningful that community will be to each member in that group.

### What is the intent you should have when considering being part of a community group?

- Be willing to grow in the knowledge, likeness, and lifestyle of Jesus.
- Understand that life with others isn't easy and isn't perfect, but it is the heart of God and the method for much of how we grow in our faith.
- Be willing to prioritize time with the community. You don't have to be a part of every meeting or gathering or event to belong. However, the more time spent alongside others in the community, the better your experience and the community will be.
- Create space for others who aren't like you but are exploring what it means to follow Jesus, to belong to the community you are in.

### The Community Groups will:

- Connect regularly with each other in their group, whether that it is in person or by phone, email, text, zoom, carrier pigeon, etc.
- Be aware of needs within the group, and either help the group to meet each other's needs or pass broader needs on to the Care Team Area Leader or the Pastor for support from the wider church.

The vision for these groups is not to be just a bible study, but to be a community. There are many ways to connect, grow, and include everyone in the group. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:

- Meals together
- Prayer night (zoom or in person - or both)
- Read scripture together
- Read a book together that helps you orient towards Jesus
- Bring food to someone
- Serve in your community together
- Serve one another
- Write letters to each other, especially children
- Gather for Sundays – watch the live stream together, sit together.
- Have a game night
- Bring coffee to each other's work (or house)
- Babysit for someone from the group
- Learn and apply everyone's spiritual gift
- Watch one of the kid's sports games as a group

The leaders are also not expected to do all the work for the community, but instead, help the community grow to flourish and connect with God and one another with their gifts, skills, and abilities. A healthy marker for a group is when people in the group share ownership, and bring dreams, gifts, and hurts to share with others. Some groups may plan to rotate locations, rotate hosting a study or organize a gathering. The beauty of shared responsibility is that everyone can discover and grow abilities they don't naturally come by, in a community and culture of grace and encouragement. Everyone in the group should be champions for each other. For a community to grow, intentionality is key. Setting a goal or a vision is helpful for everyone to know where and what you are doing. If you don't know what success looks like it is hard to know when you have found it. Set a goal, and a target as a community. We want to X by Y because Z.

Examples of goals:

- a) We want to gather weekly and study Romans because we notice the need to root our faith deeper in the word.
- b) We will serve at a local school every other week for this school year because we feel led to be active in the community and invest in lives of children.
- c) We will fast every Friday for the month of January because we want to grow in our spiritual disciplines and meet God in ways that we wouldn't explore otherwise.