



Recommended Resources for Community Groups

This is a list of resources that we hope will help your group grow both towards each other and towards God. Our hope is that you will discover what it means to be the church in our day-in-age and live it out in smaller community groups.

Along with the material in this document, there should be a shared responsibility (or an intentional direction of growth toward shared responsibility) to make an environment where faith can be practiced, not performed. This means that people can be honest, ask questions, and fail. This isn't about setting a low bar for a community, but instead, allowing for everyone to feel like they can try out faith practices that they may not have before, with the hopes of life, growth, and transformation. Community groups are a critical part of our church community growing in the knowledge, likeness, and lifestyle of Jesus.

The following are a few resources chosen to help you gain shared perspectives within your community group, embrace deeper practices for a Jesus centered lifestyle, as well as ways to express that to and with others. This is intended to give direction for our groups over the long haul. Do not feel like you and your community group need to accomplish all this content in the next 12 months. Rather, these are intended to be the starting point for ideas for the next few years. These are not the only ideas since there will likely be others that are part of our church's pathway of discipleship in the future. For example, the Abide Guide is a tool that is designed to be gone through several times, rather than just once. Each time we engage in faith practices, God heals, grows, and restores us in new and different ways. I (Pastor Brad) have been through it at least 4 times in different ways with different people over the 3 years I have been at Stanley Park Community Church.

So have a look to see what can help you and your community group grow and form in the knowledge, likeness, and lifestyle of Jesus.

1) **Gospel fluency** -There are 5 parts:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-vtTkahgcSo&ab_channel=Soma
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EV-Y14h3qQ8&ab_channel=Soma
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1p-qARvlpEw&ab_channel=Soma
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66zMusFp5IM&ab_channel=Soma
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-F4oW1WpcLM&ab_channel=Soma

2) **Abide Guide**

As part of the Conferences' renewal project, we have joined a movement called "Church Renewal." This project is a long-haul project, but it is a very good one and well worth the time required. Abide is a 16-week guide with daily reflection / practice opportunities. At the end of each week in Abide, the idea is to meet with your group to discuss highlights and lowlights from the past week, what stood out to you from the material, and what have you tried to apply in your life. While the individual portions are to be done daily, as a group you can meet weekly, or bi-weekly, or however you are best able to find a rhythm. Please note: if you as a leader have not been through Abide yet, please highlight that to Pastor Brad as that would be valuable before leading your community group through the material.

- 3) **“The Good and Beautiful…” books:** this series is a great grounding and growing tool that encourages communities to have a shared knowledge of God, life, and community. These books can be shared around between groups who have the desire to engage in these books together.
- a) The Good and Beautiful God
 - b) The Good and Beautiful Life
 - c) The Good and Beautiful Community
- 4) **Bible study** - nothing replaces being in the scripture so here are some resources that engage with the Word of God as a community.
Free / printable <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/courses/>
- 5) **Bi-annual Church groups gathering**
Hearing God is a 6-week course where the whole church is invited to gather, reflect and explore what it means to hear God. We will also spend time discussing how we have heard God in the past and are still hearing His voice today. These 6 weeks are part of the larger Abide material. The Abide material will continue to be something our community uses over and over as it's not about the information in it, rather it is about its usefulness in guiding us more and more towards transformation into the likeness and lifestyle of Jesus.

Alpha is a 10–11-week church wide project. The hope is that our community groups and our whole community will gather and invite people who are exploring the ways of Jesus. In this time together it would be great to eat, converse, and gather in community with people who do not know Jesus or are still discovering who Jesus is. Being part of peoples' stories of faith is a wonderful growth mechanism in our own individual discipleship to Jesus. Being part of the work Jesus is doing in someone's life is one way God keeps a church community humble and active on His mission to see everyone know Him and come into a lifesaving and transforming relationship.