

Oakwood's Community Group Ministry

Definition, Purpose, & Values

Revised 10-5-09

DEFINITION & PURPOSE

A community group within Oakwood Community Church is a purposeful & planned environment of from three to fifteen people regularly meeting together to experience authentic community and spiritual growth.

Authentic Community involves: Accountability, Belonging, & Care

Spiritual Growth involves excelling in 3 Loves:

- *Loving God* – growing in our relationship with God
- *Loving One Another* – growing in our care for & ministry to fellow Christ-followers
- *Loving Others* – growing in our contagious & compassionate influence toward non-followers

Values and Goals

Oakwood Community Groups prepare people to follow Christ by...

1. Building *Relationships* - While prayer and discussion of God's truths are key elements of a community group, the driving force behind the group is the building of relationships. While there may be varying emphases and forms, Community Groups engage in three dimensions of ministry: loving, learning, and doing.
2. Encouraging *Authenticity* - The atmosphere of a Community Group should encourage openness and transparency among members. This is an environment where people should feel free to be themselves.
3. Expecting *Confidentiality* - For authenticity to occur, members must be able to trust that issues discussed with a Community Group are not to be shared outside of the group.
4. Focusing on *Application* – Accurately grasping God's truths is important, yet true knowledge must be applied into life so that spiritual growth progresses.
5. Promoting *Respect* - Group members should never say anything that will embarrass their spouse or members of the group.
6. Developing *Availability* - A primary responsibility of community is to prioritize for specific relationships. This requires a willingness to be available to meet each other's needs.
7. Planning for *Multiplication* - Group members recognize that one of the goals of their group is to start a new group within 18-24 months. This allows more people to experience the Community Group dynamic of growing in excelling in *The 3 Loves*.

Additional values

- Community groups are a means to pursue God, not an end in themselves.
- Community groups are a key means to accomplishing Oakwood's mission to transform ordinary people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.
- Community group involvement is an essential element of being a responsible member of Oakwood.
- Community groups challenge and assist each member to grow spiritually, recognize and develop his or her ministry gifting, and become a responsible ministering individual to the church, community and world.
- Community groups are the most effective context for identifying, recruiting and developing new community group leaders.
- Community group leaders are intentionally connected to the Oakwood leadership for authorization, training, encouragement and support.

VISION

To continually grow and develop Group Leaders,
who will grow and develop people in Community Groups,
who will reach out to incorporate new people each year,
who will join and multiply new groups,
which will grow and develop a mature church,
which will permeate Tampa and the world
with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.