

Guidelines for TPC Small Groups/Community Groups

In churches large and small, worship is biblically conducted with the entire local assembly of the family of God together, with the opportunity to participate alongside many other believers in the proper worship of our triune God. Discipleship and personal involvement in the church community often are better conducted in smaller, more personal groups, where the environment allows for more intimate sharing, confession, growth, prayer, and accountability.

At TPC, we strongly endorse and support these small groups (we'll use the term interchangeably with "community groups") for all the spiritual health and benefits that they offer to individuals, families, and the entire church.

Toward that end, TPC offers these guidelines that we believe will promote not only the development but also the sustainment of small groups:

- Small groups can be formed in many ways, and around many different common means, including geographic convenience, convenient meeting times, shepherding groups, and childcare needs (or not). We also certainly welcome groups that form organically through friendships and common needs or desires.
- A TPC elder should be engaged with the leadership of each small group to understand the "pulse" of how the group is operating. An elder is NOT required to attend each meeting (that's both impractical and unnecessary) but we do believe it is helpful for an elder to be at least occasionally involved in each small group and aware of its needs.
- The activities and focus of a small group should largely (but not exclusively) be toward discipleship and growing in faith together, including studying books of the Bible ("Bible Study") or books about the Bible (with session approval), discussion of past sermons, singing, sharing, and prayer. This is not an exhaustive list.
- We believe that each small group should largely determine its own set of logistics and rules including time, location and duration of meetings, childcare, size, content, and rhythm of each meeting, etc.
- To avoid any sense of "clique" or exclusiveness (which we believe is antithetical to the call of Christ), we would like each TPC small group to be recognized publicly. We do, however, understand that groups may need to impose reasonable limits on their attendance roster in line with their existing practices and logistical constraints (e.g., no one has a home large enough to hold more than "X" number of people).
- A TPC elder will be assigned oversight over all small groups to help coordinate between them and share best practices and lessons learned. This elder can also match interested members to the most appropriate small group.

In summary, we LOVE the idea and benefit of TPC small groups and want to help them both form and flourish. Questions should be directed to the Small Group Oversight Elder (currently Ben Zintak).