

Community Group Conference: Fall 2017

Captain Commitment

Here, you will describe your commitment to the leaders. Make sure to include that you are committed to the following for the next year:

- Prayer – you will pray for your leaders and their groups weekly.
- Relationship – you will commit to getting to know your leaders by getting together and keeping up with them by calls, texts, and emails.
- Support – If they have any questions or issues, they can count on you for answers, direction, discernment/wisdom, etc. Also, if need be, Captains are willing to jump in to handle more serious relational/sin issues.
- Accountability – you will hold the leaders accountable to the things that are expected of them.

Leader Expectations

It's important to understand that the commitment of leaders in their preparation for meetings as well as their commitment to relationally invest in their participants will set the pace for the entire group.

- Prayer – Leaders should commit to pray consistently for each group member throughout the course of CG.
- Preparation – leaders should commit to grasp the subject matter of each week's assignment such that they are able to answer reasonable questions pertaining to the week's topic. This includes even when they are not in charge of facilitating!
- Church Attendance – this seems like a given, but leaders should commit to attending Sunday worship with regularity. This helps to model what we expect of participants. This is also a great way to welcome group members to attend the same service and to sit together. Also, it makes you available to get a meal before or after the service.

Participant Expectations

There's a misconception that CG is a lesser investment or easier or more lax than GG. That is wrong.

- Your first meeting, go over the expectations for participants, highlighting that the success of the CG will depend on their collective commitment to the group. We have provided an outline for you to follow for the first week – follow it exactly.
 - Curriculum – Everyone should work through the book completely every week. The more prepared everyone is, the more they will get out of it personally and the better they will be able to participate in group discussion. Also, all people should commit to being willing to facilitate discussion at some point during the year.
 - Attendance – Consistency in attendance is critical for CG. 75% attendance is the minimum standard. If people start to be negligent in attendance, bring it up with them and try to figure out a solution!
 - Worship – Attendance at GBC on Sundays helps put the curriculum in context, both relationally and biblically.

- Life Story – At some point throughout the year, every participant in their group should expect to tell their life story in 10-15 minutes.

Life Story

- Each person in your group should share their life story.
- The purpose of sharing life stories is twofold: they help people get to know each other better and train participants to communicate the gospel as they tell their life story.
 - We have created a document for you to give to people as they tell their life story. This will help people know what to focus on and to ensure that they incorporate the gospel into their testimony.
 - *Tip: Ask the person that just did their life story to pick the person who goes the next week. This will free you up to not have to ask for a volunteer every week and gives ownership over to your group members.*
- Traditionally, a lot of groups have done one per meeting. An alternative way to do testimonies is to have several people share during a dinner, three or four times during the year. This helps your group get to know each other much faster. Also, practically, it can help save time in your group meetings if you are looking to do that.

Curriculum Discussion

- Plan on having participants of the group facilitating conversation from week to week. Set this expectation from the beginning.
 - Doing this accomplishes several things – it frees you up to be more relational with your group, it gives an opportunity for other people to use their gifts, and it creates ownership and buy-in from the group.
 - Even people that do not feel qualified/gifted should be encouraged to lead. This will give you an opportunity to meet with that person and walk through how you go about preparing, etc.
- There are a lot of different ways to do this. Below are some tips:
 - Instead of having just one person lead every week, get two people to lead. This will force people to get together outside of the group to get to know each other and to prepare to lead with each other.
 - Make it a rule that couples can't lead together. This encourages people to get to know others in the group better and ensures that everyone participates in facilitating.
 - Getting people to call on each other is helpful. Whoever leads one week gets the opportunity to call out the people who will lead the next week.

Prayer

- As a leader, you will have to work very hard to make this time meaningful. You facilitate discussion, but you are a leader when it comes to prayer.
- Always encourage prayer that is spiritually substantive – don't allow people to settle praying for their great aunt's broken toe. Lead by example by being willing to be vulnerable and open yourself.
- Don't be afraid to ask someone for something more personal to pray about or to press when you feel like someone is being guarded.

- Sometimes, asking a specific application question from the week can help direct or guide people's prayer requests. (We'll talk more about this when we all get together.)
- You should try and vary the way that you do prayer time to keep it fresh and meaningful. Some ideas on how to do prayer differently:
 - Bring notecards, have people right down prayer request, and give it to the person on the right/left. Instruct that person to pray for whoever's notecard they received.
 - Pray out loud for the person to your right.
 - Stay together and pray. (We'll talk more about this when we're all together.)

Fellowship / Service

- Scheduling weeks for fellowship is important. Groups should be taking pauses from the curriculum to get together for dinner to get to know each other better. Do not wait too long to do this.
 - Having dinner at the host home is a great idea allows people to mingle and get a chance to talk to everyone.
- If you are a carryover group, the success or failure of other people assimilating is on you. Make sure to be welcoming to new people and to invite them into community.
- There are several opportunities to serve as a group, and there are church funds available. However, serving together as a group is not an obligation or requirement. That said, it could be a good way to get out of the house and see people in a different environment.