



**REDEMPTION**  
CHURCH

**REDEMPTION GROUPS**  
**LEADER GUIDE**

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## **THE MISSION AND VISION OF REDEMPTION CHURCH**

### **MISSION:**

to make authentic followers of Jesus  
who live for the Glory of God  
and the good of our world.

### **VISION:**

to create a church where everyday people  
wake up to deep, meaningful life in Christ.

## **REDEMPTION GROUPS GOAL AND INGREDIENTS:**

### **GOAL:**

to multiply communities of people committed to  
authentically following Jesus *together*.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

Friendship  
Scripture  
Honesty  
Prayer  
Care

## WHY REDEMPTION GROUPS?

We hope everyone will belong in community with others because God created us for a community. We believe following Jesus is a group project, so we are intentional about connecting people in Redemption Groups to learn, laugh, challenge, struggle, pray, serve, and share life with one another. We are all on a spiritual journey that has both highs and lows, mountains and valleys, celebration and struggle along the way. And we believe that we grow best as disciples (followers) of Jesus when we are connected in authentic community where we learn to believe the gospel together. Our greatest good is found as we walk with Jesus—and with others—through it all. Redemption Groups are great places to explore what faith looks like in the day-to-day of life.

Our vision for our church is to see people all around our city wake up to deep, meaningful life in Christ. Said another way, we want to help every person who walks through the doors of Redemption Church to grow as a follower of Jesus. To us, discipleship (growing as a follower of Jesus) is not a strategy, program, Bible study, or ministry—it's a way of life. We want to help one another live in light of the gospel and in line with the gospel. This is where Redemption Groups fit in. Groups are where we pursue growth as followers of Jesus who are well-equipped for life *alongside others* who want the same thing.

Deep, meaningful life in Christ doesn't happen simply from attending church for one hour on Sunday mornings. We only experience the life God wants for us in Christ when we learn to bring all of our life—Monday through Sunday, 24/7, 365, all that we think, say, and do—into alignment with the kingdom of God. The only way this happens is if we have other people in our lives who know us well enough to encourage us, challenge us, and continually point us back to Jesus through the day-to-day stuff of life. And, as individuals grow personally and a small group grows together, the watching world is pointed to world's true King: Jesus. The goal of Redemption Groups is to multiply communities of people committed to authentically following Jesus *together*.

## WHAT DO REDEMPTION GROUPS LOOK LIKE?

So if Redemption Groups are where we carve out space to authentically follow Jesus *together*, what does that look like? In other words, *how* do we authentically follow Jesus together? To clearly and succinctly identify what following Jesus together in a Redemption Group looks like, we've chosen to talk about five ingredients that should be present in every Redemption Group: friendship, Scripture, honesty, prayer, and care.

### FRIENDSHIP

The first ingredient is *friendship*. Friendship—or you might say community, fellowship, or family—is an essential ingredient to any Redemption Group. Of the 59 “one another” commands in the New Testament at least 15 of them explicitly encourage Christians to “love one another.” When we are saved, God saves us into a new community and the defining mark of this new community is love. It's only natural then that following Jesus together alongside other brothers and sisters in Christ in the context of a small group would involve developing a loving friendship with others. Loving friendship should characterize all aspects of church life, but groups are one of the best spaces for deep, spiritual friendships to develop and for our love for other followers of Christ to grow. Friendships usually develop around shared interests or proximity (i.e. neighbors, co-workers, parents of classmates), but church small groups are unique in that the uniting factor of our friendship is Christ. We are friends not because we look like one another, live next to one another, or like to do the same things—we are friends because we love Jesus and want to follow him.

### SCRIPTURE

The second ingredient for groups is Scripture. We believe that the Bible is the written Word of God and should guide all of Christian belief and practice. If our goal in groups is to follow Jesus together, then the Bible must be our guide along the way. But the goal isn't simply to learn information about the Bible; the goal is to *live* the Bible. Small groups are one of the best contexts to process Scripture in community with others and seek to apply the Scriptures to real life, with the accountability and encouragement of community all along the way.

## **HONESTY**

Up next is honesty. 1 John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another." In context, "walking in the light" emphasizes the importance of living in alignment with God's character and God's kingdom *and* being open and honest about the ways in which our lives are inconsistent with God's character and God's kingdom. This theme of honesty shows up again and again in the New Testament. Another example is James 5:16 where James encourages believers to "confess your sins to one another." Confessing our sin to one another brings the areas of our lives that are hidden into the light where they can be dealt with. One of the greatest barriers to pursuing Jesus together is dishonesty (or only sharing partially) about how we are really doing—emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Honesty is hard. But honesty in a small group leads to fellowship, growth, and life—both individually and for the group.

## **PRAYER**

The fourth ingredient for a Redemption Group is prayer. Prayer is the path to spiritual vitality. Without prayer our faith—including participating in a small group—easily becomes a lifeless religious routine. Not only is prayer an essential part of our relationship with God personally, it's also an essential part of our relationship to one another before God. Prayer forces us to look beyond ourselves and cultivates a real relationship with God that restores and re-centers our lives. Prayer also cultivates our love for one another. Bonhoeffer wrote, "Christian fellowship lives and exists by the intercession (prayer) of its members for one another, or it collapses." Community is hard. People will let us down. Needs and burdens can be heavy. And prayer is the glue that holds everything together.

## **CARE**

Our last ingredient is *care*. In Acts 2, we see a picture of the early church in Jerusalem and one of the striking characteristics is that they were "selling their possessions...and distributing the proceeds to all." We see this same theme in Paul's letters as well when he challenges 1st century churches to "bear one another's burdens" (Gal 6:2), "(look) to the interests of others" (Phil 2:4), and "contribute to the needs of the saints" (Rom 12:13). In short, Christians in community with one another care for one another. We care for physical needs and spiritual needs. We care when the needs are small and when the need is big. We care when it doesn't

require much of us and we care when it costs us. At Redemption, small groups are the primary place of care for our people, but we also have a Prayer and Care Team for needs that go beyond what a small group can meet (see Appendix Four).

## HOW DO REDEMPTION GROUPS WORK?

So far we've seen that the goal of Redemption Groups is to multiply communities of people committed to authentically following Jesus *together*. We've seen why we have small groups at Redemption and why connecting people groups is a high priority for us. And we've seen the five ingredients that make up our groups and help us see our vision of following Jesus together become a reality. Now let's get practical. How do Redemption Groups work? We'll look at *who* groups are made up of, *when* groups gather, and *what* groups do when they gather.

### WHO

Redemption Groups are usually made up of 10-20 adults. Some groups may be smaller or larger, but for the most part groups should aim to be between 10-20 adults. Groups can consist of men and women, women only, or men only. Some groups will have kids and others won't.

### WHEN

Groups meet for three periods called "trimesters" over the course of the calendar year. In general we take three breaks (4-6 weeks) during the more "busy seasons" of the year (i.e. holidays and back-to-school). These break points help create natural on-ramps for those exploring groups for the first time and off-ramps for those who may need to make a change. This rhythm also allows for our leaders and host homes to rest and attend trainings and other gatherings.

### Example of a Calendar Year for Groups

Fall Trimester	Mid September - Early December (12 weeks)
Break	Early December - January
Winter/Spring Trimester	February - April (12 weeks)
Break	May
Summer Trimester	June - July (10 weeks)
Break	August

Groups generally meet in homes on a night that works best for the group. Most groups will meet Sunday-Thursday and avoid weekends. Another consideration is that RSM meets on



Wednesday evenings, which might make attending small group on Wednesday evening difficult for parents of students.

Groups that meet on weeknights will usually start at 6:30, but some might start at 7 or even 6. Groups meeting on Sunday have more flexibility for meeting times but should generally meet early enough to wrap up before dinner or late enough for people to eat dinner beforehand. Most groups will meet for an hour and a half but some may choose to meet for two hours.

*Note: Some groups may choose to meet twice a month instead of weekly. Because of our trimester schedule, it is generally best to meet every week because a group meeting bi-monthly will only meet 17 times in the entire year. However, there may be circumstances where it makes sense to meet twice a month. Group leaders and potential group leaders who would like to meet twice a month should process this decision with the Minister of Community and Connection.*

## **WHAT**

The goal of Redemption Groups is to follow Jesus together and a healthy group that is following Jesus together will include friendship, Scripture, honesty, prayer, and care. So what do groups do when they meet together? There's no one-size fits all. Groups are more art than science.

It might be helpful to think about an analogy like baking bread. Basic bread is made from four simple ingredients: flour, water, salt, and yeast. However, by changing the amount of each ingredient or the type of ingredient—white versus wheat flour for example—you get a different loaf of bread. Redemption Groups are similar because all groups are composed of the same five ingredients—friendship, Scripture, honesty prayer, and care—but each group will look different in how they go about incorporating those values into their group. Part of your job as a group leader is to find the recipe that works best for you group!

### **Friendship**

So if groups should be characterized by loving friendship, what are some ways leaders can foster friendship among group members?

- Set aside unstructured time during group time just to connect with no agenda

- Share a meal together during group
- Create time for group members to share their Story (see below)
- Use a group messaging system for the group to stay connected throughout the week
- Have a game night or other fun night in place of a “regular” group gathering
- Get together outside of group time for coffee, lunch/dinner, or to have fun

### **Scripture**

If God’s Word should guide our belief and practice, what are some ways leaders can foster a growing knowledge, love, and application of God’s Word in group?

- Use the provided sermon discussion questions (see below)
- Read a Psalm or other short portion of Scripture to open group
- Ask one another what you are learning through personal engagement with God’s Word

### **Honesty**

Honesty with others about what is really going on with us is essential for deep, meaningful life in Christ. To be completely honest with others almost always requires time in small, gender specific groups. If a Redemption Group is a mixed gender group, this will require intentionally setting aside time to be in gender specific groups. This can look different from group to group but here are some examples:

- Alternate between the whole group meeting together one week and gender specific groups the next week
- Alternate between women meeting and men watching children and men meeting and women watching children
- Meet in gender specific groups once a month
- Set aside part of group time to meet in gender specific groups
- Have a monthly rotation that includes the whole group meeting together and gender specific groups meeting together (maybe include a meal night or fun night as well)

Another barrier to honesty is group size. It’s really hard for most people to feel comfortable sharing deeply in groups larger than 6 people. Because most groups have more than 6 men or women, leaders will likely need to utilize smaller groups within the small group in order to foster

honesty. Again, this will look different from group to group but for most groups this will likely require breaking out into small groups of 3-4 men or women within the group for gender specific times. Some groups may choose to keep the same groups of 3-4 for the whole year or trimester while others may choose different groups each time.

Once in smaller, gender specific groups what are some ways leaders can foster honesty in group?

- Make space for people to confess their sins and struggles to one another
- Invite group members to share their current highs and lows
- Utilize d group material???
- Use the provided sermon discussion questions in gender-specific groups
- Create time for men and women to share their Story in gender specific groups
- Provide ongoing accountability for things that are shared through prayer, group messages, and follow up conversations both during and outside of group time

### **Prayer**

If prayer is the practice that glues a group together and breathes life into a group, what are some ways leaders can foster prayer amongst and for group members?

- Pray through a Psalm as a group at the beginning of group time
- Ask a group member to pray over your time together before you start
- Create space for prayer requests to be shared and pray for requests
- Invite and encourage other people to pray
- Set aside time for extended prayer (20-30 min or more)
- Invite people to share prayer requests on group messages
- Pause during group time to pray for hard or joyous things that are shared or confessed

### **Care**

If small groups are the primary place of care for members of Redemption, how can groups care for one another?

- Provide meals when someone has a baby, surgery, or experiences a death in their family

- Share skills when someone has a need (i.e. fixing a car, helping with taxes, etc.)
- Help others out financially when needed and when possible
- Watch kids for other families

## WHO LEADS A REDEMPTION GROUP?

By this point you may be excited to lead a Redemption Group, overwhelmed, or somewhere in-between. Leading a group is definitely hard and important work. But you don't have to be an "expert" Christian to lead a group. Our small groups are all about following Jesus together and therefore anyone who is following Jesus faithfully and wants to help others do so as well is invited to lead a small group! Here are a few simple qualifications for Redemption Group leaders. Group leaders be...

1. **Seeking to obey and glorify God in all areas of life.** We do not expect our group leaders to be perfect Christians because there are no perfect Christians! What we do expect is that group leaders will seek to obey and glorify God in all areas of life, and that there is evidence in their life that this is the case.
2. **Pursuing spiritual growth through the spiritual disciplines and by participating in the weekly worship gathering.** Our small groups are all about helping one another follow Jesus through community and the primary job of the small group leader is to facilitate this in the group. Therefore, group leaders ought to be pursuing Jesus personally by practicing the spiritual disciplines (prayer, Bible reading, etc.) and by participating in the weekly worship gathering.
3. **A member of Redemption Church and are active in a Redemption Group and on a Serve Team (or in process in these areas).** Group leaders ought to set a good example by being active participants in the life of our church. The three primary ways this happens are by serving on a Serve Team, attending a Redemption Group, and by becoming a member.
4. **Available to lead and handle the logistics for a small group.** Everyone is busy and none of us have enough time, but leading a small group does take time each week and therefore leaders need to have the available time to prepare for and regularly lead their group. Leaders also need to make sure the group has a place to meet (whether that's the leader's home or elsewhere), that childcare is taken care of (if applicable), that a group chat or communication tool is available, and that group members know about upcoming events in the life of the church and the group. Group leaders do not need to do all of these things on their own, but leaders are ultimately responsible that these things happen for their group.

## **REDEMPTION GROUP LEADER COACHING**

As a Redemption Group leader, you are not alone! We are committed to connecting you to other group leaders and to Redemption Church staff in order to support and encourage you as you lead your group. Ongoing support and coaching happens in the following ways:

### **Group Leader Gatherings**

During each trimester break, Group leaders gather together to debrief the previous trimester. These gatherings should be about encouragement and processing, not training or information dumping. Some sort of food and drink will be provided. During the gathering, group leaders are invited to share victories and struggles from their group and time will be spent praying for each group leader.

### **Leadership Community Gatherings**

In addition to Group leader specific gatherings, Redemption also makes space to encourage and pour into our wider leadership community through Re-Fuel Gatherings, Leaders Retreats, and other “workshop” type events. Re-Fuel Gatherings generally take place during the fall and winter/spring trimesters and retreats and workshops generally take place in January or the summer. Retreats and workshops do not happen every year.

### **Regular Check-Ins**

Redemption staff and group leaders should check in regularly throughout the year. These check-ins can be by text, phone calls, in-person lunch or coffee meetings, and/or by visiting groups.

## **APPENDIX ONE - SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**

At Redemption Church we believe that Jesus is the best teacher and disciple maker there ever was. Throughout the Gospels, we see Jesus teaching in a variety of ways. Sometimes, Jesus is teaching as he is traveling, at other times we Jesus teaching from the scrolls in the temple, and other times Jesus is sitting near the sea by a fire teaching his disciples. Whatever the setting may be, there is a common marker that tends to be found within Jesus' teaching. Questions. Jesus asked a lot of questions.

In Redemption Groups, we want to help every person discover their need for Jesus by deepening the conversations and deepening relationships through discussion. The following material is some guidance for how we want to lead our small groups.

### **GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES**

To cultivate and encourage the unity of Redemption Church's mission, vision, and values, we provide *Discussion Questions* based on each week's sermon passage and sermon. These notes aim to guide conversations surrounding the Biblical text covered in the sermon and help people to live out what they are learning. Group discussions help us know God, know ourselves, and know each other. It is always helpful for the group to have listened to the sermon before attending group; however, *Discussion Questions* are designed to engage everyone regardless of their Sunday attendance. *Discussion Questions* provide a template or model for basic Bible study and authentic conversation that can be used in any season of discipleship. We hope the practice of leading or participating in *Discussion Questions* will equip each person with tools to study the Bible on their own and have faith conversations with friends, family, co-workers, neighbors, etc.

### **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DISCUSSION**

Its always good to keep a few things in mind as you lead discussion in small group. First, remember that you always want dialogue over monologue. When leading small group discussion, it can be easy to revert to filling silence with your own voice or asking very obvious questions just, so someone will answer. Fight this temptation. Later, we will discuss how to ask good questions, but for now, here are a few things to remember:

- **Silence isn't bad.** So, don't rush in to rescue every quiet moment. Wait for them to open up, even if it takes a little while.
- **Don't be afraid to give people space** to process either by talking out loud or by pulling back a bit to reflect. It may feel messy sometimes, but each person thinks and ponders in their own way.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** Asking questions with obvious answers can come across trite and condescending. If the answer is "yes," "no," or "Jesus," you may want to ask a question that is a little more open ended.
- **Ask follow-up questions.** When a person speaks up with an answer, you can use that as an opportunity to ask a follow-up question to continue that line of thought until they think a little deeper.
- **Restate answers for clarity.** When someone speaks, they may have the main idea right, but things may not always come out very succinctly or clearly. So, feel free to restate the answer in a straightforward way to make sure others understand.
- **Some rabbit trails need a stop sign.** Sometimes, you will need stop a line of thoughts to return to the topic. Don't stress about it. Just say something simple like, "That's an interesting idea, but I want us to talk some more on the question about..." Note: this bullet point says "some" rabbit trails because there are actually some rabbit trails worth pursuing—see the next point below for more on this.
- **Pursue people over programs.** This may feel like it contradicts the last bullet point, but some rabbit trails are worth following. If the discussion trails off down a path that pertains to the Lord and their life, please go with them. If they are obviously emotionally or intellectually moved / bothered by something, we don't want to be dismissive if the conversation is surfacing something they really need to talk about. The discussion questions that you will be provided with are merely a means to an end. If you do not get through all your questions, that is ok. The goal of small group is for people to know God, know themselves, and know one another better. Don't make the notes the goal; don't make your cool insights the objective.
- **Group is not Sunday School.** We do not want to establish a classroom environment where you are the resident authority on the subject matter with minimal group participation. Fight the temptation to ask questions that set you up to be the Bible answer man (or woman). Fight the temptation to merely stay intellectual with your study.



- **Celebrate people as they speak and share.** Even if a someone is mistaken you can still celebrate their willingness to speak up. Remember that people are validated when they hear their own voice and are affirmed by others.
- **Help your group learn to value one another.** Valuing the thoughts of others with your attention is part of your growth and sanctification. The idea that the 'last shall be first is mentioned repeatedly by Jesus—see Matt. 19.30, mark 10.31, Luke 13.30. When we act kind to others as they speak, it takes humility and patience, as we respect the dignity of others who are made in the image of God. Everyone struggles with humility and patience at times, so this will be a regular reminder as we seek to love one another as God loves us.

## **WHEN THINGS GET TOUGH**

### Correcting Wrong Answers

When a person speaks up with an answer that is not correct, you will likely feel unsure how best to respond. First, don't overreact, this is normal. You may even have people in your group who are not believers or who don't trust the Bible. That's good — we want them here where we have a chance to show them God's love and truth. When this happens, avoid these two extremes: (1) do not overreact or harshly reject what the person said (this would embarrass the person), and (2) do not affirm what they said (this would be confusing for the person and for others). In these cases, it is often best to simply show appreciation for their participation, and then redirect the conversation or re-ask the question for more responses. You might say something like, "Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_, for your thoughts on that. Does anyone have an idea or know what the Bible says about that?" If what they said was truly against what the Bible says, you might need to say, "You know, I don't think that fits with what the Bible teaches. Do any of you know of any places where the Bible teaches us something different?" If a student is either (a) really adamant about their wrong belief, or (b) really distracting the group with their opinion, it may be helpful or even necessary to say, "Hey \_\_\_\_\_, why don't you and I continue that conversation after our group conversation today. Would it be okay if we talk more then?" In general, know that people are resilient, and they can handle these kinds of conversations if they have experienced your respect and kindness along the way.

### Answering Hard Questions

When people ask tough questions that you may not know a quick answer to, be honest. Place a high value on asking tough questions and also in helping them find answers. Sometimes you can say: “That’s a great question. I will do some digging and get back to you on that one.” Or, you can connect the person with another leader or a pastor to explore that question; in this case, you might say something like: “Hey, let’s go talk with \_\_\_\_ about that one. I bet they would have some helpful suggestions.” We want to acknowledge the difficult issues that exist and resist the temptation to give a pat answer, especially if we sense it’s an area of real struggle for a student. When church isn’t a place you can ask and talk about difficult issues, people will turn to the more accessible answers in the culture around them. We *WANT TO* be the place the come with their doubts and questions!

### Dealing with Hard Issues

People may bring life situations into your conversations (an impending divorce, an argument with a co-worker, a sibling who is making bad decisions, a moral situation with a friend, or a temptation they are facing). Always praise the person for their vulnerability in wanting to lean in to the hard things in life. If you can speak with wisdom on a certain issue, feel free to do so. If you feel like the issue demands more than you can answer, be honest with the person and always assure them you will help them through the issue. Talk to someone who has experience and wisdom with the issue and/or a coach, pastor, elder who can help in directing a deeper conversation or in pointing them toward helpful resources.

***It’s okay not to know what to do.*** Please know that you can always ask for help in any situation. If you aren’t sure, please reach out to another leader and / or a pastor for help.

## **APPENDIX TWO - LIFE STORY**

One of the goals of our small groups is to know others and be known by others. One of the best ways to get to know other people and to allow other people to know you is by sharing your Life Story with them. Oftentimes in a small group setting we get bits and pieces of one another's Story, but never the whole picture. Because of this, we want to build a rhythm of sharing Life Stories into our small groups. You can do this by periodically inviting people to share their Story and by taking the time to share your Story yourself. When sharing, aim for about 20 minutes and allow time for people to affirm stories and to ask questions. The following headings and questions may be used as a guide when preparing your Story.

### **Heritage**

- How have my parents or primary care givers influenced me?
- What was the general atmosphere in my home as I grew up?
- Where did I grow up? How have geographical factors influenced me?
- How have my ethnicity and culture played an important role in my life?
- Where did I find friends growing up?
- What is one significant event or life-choice that shaped my family?
- Was there a spiritual or church component in your home?

### **Heroes**

- Who has influenced me for good? How did they specifically do so?
- After whom would I like to model my life? Why?
- Who inspired me as a child? Why?
- Who has shaped my character or direction in life? How? Why?
- Did you have any spiritual heroes or mentors?

### **High Points**

- What accomplishments have brought me fulfillment or special recognition? How? Why?
- What events or people have brought me great joy?
- At what points in my life did I feel particularly good about my life? Why?
- When have I made my greatest contributions to life or others? How?

**Hard Times**

- What incidents in my life are hard to talk about with others? Why?
- Who or what has been a source of pain in my life? When? Why?
- When have I experienced a season of disappointment? Why?
- To what addictions or abuses have I been exposed either in my own life or in the lives of others?
- How has God carried you through hard times?

**General questions (These may help fill in some thoughts from above)**

- Who are the memorable people from your past? Why are they memorable for you?
- What have been the most influential experiences in your life?
- What life dreams have you had in your past?
- When you think of your parents, what memories come to mind?
- What are significant questions that you have wrestled with in your lifetime?
- Was there a time when God really worked in your life in a unique way?

## **APPENDIX THREE - GUIDE FOR COUNSEL**

As groups spend time together and get to know one another, trust builds. As trust builds so does a safe environment for talking about the hard things of life (confession). This is where care and counsel in groups surfaces. Jesus said, "In the world, you will have tribulation..." (John 16:33). We all face trials of many kinds; illness, financial hardship, struggles with reoccurring sin, loss of a job, conflict with family or friends, etc.

James 1:2-3 says, "Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness." The good news is that trials (hard times) bring about growth. Our faith and trust in God swell as we cling to His truth and confess our struggles to our brothers and sisters in the faith. "If we fellowship with him while we walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." - 1 John 1:6-7. Only through confessing with our mouths are we able to bring the darkness into the light. "If we confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." - 1 John 1:19.

As a leader, there is no way to fully plan for moments of confession or how to respond and care for one another when the hard stuff surfaces. It's okay for it to feel a bit messy. The most helpful thing the leader and the group can do in these moments is to listen and pray. We have put together the following guide to help you navigate the different stages of care and counsel that may be needed, and what level of leadership is involved in that stage. It is always okay to reach out to your coach or a pastor about care and counsel in your group.

### **GUIDE FOR STAGES OF CARE AND COUNSEL**

**Stage 1:** Individual confesses a conflict or struggle .

- Persons involved: group (primary), leader (secondary)
- Resolution: Group and group leader respond with truth and encourage individual to trust in the Spirit and Word for guidance and deliverance while continuing to walk in community

**Stage 2:** Individual confesses a secret or more private sin, or secret sin is exposed.

- Persons involved: leader (primary), coach (secondary)

- Resolution: Group leader walks alongside individual as he or she seeks healing and freedom, helping them to find additional help if needed (biblical counseling, recovery, etc.)

**Stage 3:** Individual confesses a grievous sin - sin of significant deceit and rebellion that affects close relationships - or grievous sin is exposed.

- Persons involved: coach (primary), leader (secondary)
- Resolution: Coach moves into main leadership role to provide care, counseling and additional steps to individual (biblical counseling, recovery, etc.)

**Stage 4:** Individual continues in disobedience and/or refuses to submit to counsel and accountability.

- Persons involved: pastor (primary), coach (secondary)
- Resolution: Pastor works alongside coach to provide care, counseling, and next steps

**Stage 5:** Individual dismisses the counsel of the church and pursues sin without repentance

Persons involved: elder (primary), pastor (secondary)

- Resolution: Elder and pastor work together to assess the situation and care for the individual and group

\*Adapted from the "Home Groups Handbook" from the Village Church (2014)

## **APPENDIX FOUR - PRAYER AND CARE TEAM**

We want our Redemption Groups to serve as the primary care for our church members; however, there are times when extra support is needed. This is why the Prayer & Care Team exists. This team partners with Redemption Groups, Serve Teams, and members in caring and praying for unique or special needs that may arise within the church. Some examples of special needs are:

- New births
- Major illness or surgery
- Family Crisis
- Death in the family

The Prayer and Care team can help mobilize the wider body to care and prayer over these types of needs by sharing prayer requests and needs with the staff, pastors, and elders. You can reach out to this team by emailing [prayer@redemptionedmond.com](mailto:prayer@redemptionedmond.com).

## **APPENDIX FIVE - COMMUNICATION AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **PLANNING CENTER**

Each group has a profile listed in Planning Center Groups. Leaders can visit their profile by logging into Planning Center and selecting Groups in the pulldown on the upper left corner. Some groups are listed as public, some are private, based on the type of group and room it has for new members. Every leader should know how to access their profile and verify that their group's info is correct. If you need help updating your profile please reach out to your coach.

### **ATTENDANCE TRACKING**

We ask each group leader to track attendance through Planning Center. You should receive an auto-generated email on the night of your group asking you to report attendance. Tracking attendance for groups helps you to follow up with and care for members who may have missed several meetings. It also helps our pastor, elders, and staff pray and plan.

### **LEADER COMMUNICATION**

We will send out regular communication via emails and texts. We ask that you respond to all communication in a timely manner.



## **APPENDIX SIX - WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT CHILDCARE?**

First, you can be assured that you and your group are not alone! This is a very common question and a common struggle in adult small groups. While many adults have a genuine desire to get connected in a small group where they can build good relationships and grow spiritually; it is very common for there to be childcare challenges. Second, you can be assured that there are solutions and there are thousands of groups of all types that have solved the problem and found a way to meet on a regular basis.

### **Here are some common solutions:**

1. Each family makes arrangements for their own childcare needs.
2. The group may decide to go in together and hire a baby sitter that will come to the house where the meeting is or to another house nearby. This may even be one or more of the older children in some of the families in the group.
3. The group may decide to take turns watching the children in another room of the house or in another house nearby.
4. The group may develop a rhythm where the men and women in the group alternate weeks watching kids.
5. The group may be able to work out a co-op relationship with another group that meets on another night.

## APPENDIX SEVEN - GROUP LEADER PRAYER GUIDE

### PRAYING AS A GROUP

As a leader you will need to offer some direction during this prayer time. It may feel a bit uncomfortable for you at first. Three things you will want to do to direct this prayer time.

1. Set the Tone - You will set the tone in the room. This means that people will follow your lead. People will tend to do what they see you doing. If you believe that prayer matters, they will sense they should believe it too. If you approach prayer flippantly, they will too. Be real. If you are feeling uncomfortable, feel free to share your struggles. But make sure you rest in the truth of scripture—God is real; God is good; God dwells in his people; God listens to the prayers of his children; God is living and active; God loves his people; God loves to be in relationship with us. Set the tone of faith and expectancy for your time meeting with God in prayer. We want to run after God as those who know our lives depend on Him—because they do! You may have to grow into this as well, so pray personally asking God to grow you and mature you in this area of your spiritual life and leadership. Prayer is more “caught than taught,” and this is a purposeful part of our discipleship strategy. This is essential, not optional.
2. Guide the Time - This is more art than science. Don't be afraid of a little silence. Give people space to think and process their prayers without feeling like you need to rescue them from the quiet. This is hard in our culture, but it's also healthy and renewing to sit still and realize how hard it is for us. Sometimes, you will have to cut people off and direct them to move to the next section. Other times, you will sense the group has finished praying for a topic or person and is ready to move on. Ask God to give you insight and to help guide you. Explore different postures. Most of time you should pray just as you are, but sometimes it may be helpful to have people stand, or circle up, or spread out in the room (if space allows).
3. Direct the Focus - You will want to let your group know **what** you will be praying for and **who** you want to actually do the praying. If you don't invite people to pray, they won't pray. As you get to know the people in your group, it may be appropriate to ask specific people to pray at times.

## **LIST OF THINGS YOU CAN SAY EVERY TIME YOU LEAD A GROUP IN PRAYER**

- Don't feel the need to dress your prayers up in fancy or spiritual language. Pray as you are.
- This not a performance, this is a time to practice.
- Pray a couple sentences at a time so that others have a chance to pray.
- Pray along the grain of scripture (turn scripture into a prayer).
- Don't be afraid of silence. It's part of prayer. Turn this into listening for God to guide your prayers.

## **HOW TO NAVIGATE PRAYER REQUESTS IN GROUP SETTINGS**

Everyone comes from different backgrounds when it comes to prayer. This can make things a bit tricky to navigate when praying with your group. Here are a couple suggestions:

- 1) **Keep the prayers focused on the group member's specific needs.** People tend to want to talk about everyone else's prayer needs before they want to talk about their own. This is not necessarily wrong, but oftentimes requests about co-workers, relatives, or other's illnesses/hard-times can take president over very tangible prayer needs in our own lives.
- 2) **Suggest having someone start a prayer request list for the other prayer requests** that involve people and circumstances outside of the group and invite the group to pray for those throughout the week.

Try guiding the prayer request time by saying something like: *"How can the group pray for you tonight?"* or *"What has been stirring in your heart tonight that we can pray through together as a group?"* Remember, practicing prayer is the aim! We don't want to shut anyone down from taking a step toward prayer. Use your best discretion as you steer the group toward a more personal posture of prayer.