

Missio Dei Fellowship Community Groups at a Glance

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1. What is a Community Group?

Churches have different names for their small group ministries. Some are simply called small groups, fellowship groups, Bible studies or Care groups. Our small group ministry is called Community Groups to stress the community and fellowship aspects of a small group ministry.

2. What is the model for a MDF Community Group

Inspiration for our Community Group Ministry comes from the New Testament:

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
(Acts 2:42-47 ESV)

The model explained and expounded upon are from:

Why Small Groups by C.J. Mahaney (Sovereign Grace Ministries)

Why Small Groups explains the necessity for small groups and the commitment necessary to make a small group work as it should. Another volume, titled *Envision, Equip, Experience* by Rick Thomas of Counseling Solutions sharpens the focus of *Why Small Groups* by assuming that the best group leader is going to be the best group member. *Envision, Equip, Experience* emphasizes that a group member should:

- 1) Have a genuine desire to be part of the group
- 2) Have a genuine desire to grow in the Lord and fight sin
- 3) Have a genuine desire to hear hard things from others and help others by saying hard things with grace and love when necessary.

Both books are available from MDF.

3. What is central in an MDF Community Group?

The gospel (1 Cor. 15:3).

The application of the gospel to our daily lives.

Becoming like Jesus is central to our community groups.

4. Who leads an MDF Community Group?

Community Group leaders are males selected by the pastoral staff. Apprentice leaders are selected by the pastoral staff, elders and by existing group leaders. Leadership of the group is

male (2 Tim. 2:12). These men are considered to be undershepherds of their groups.

Other leadership positions within a community group are a Care person and Missions person. These positions can be either male or female.

The Care person is concerned with needs that arise within the group and within MDF.

The Mission's person is concerned with MDF missions and the missional aspects of the group. At times, the two positions overlap.

5. Do I have to be a member of MDF to be in Community Group?

The answer to that question is yes, but with a qualifier.

Community Groups are primarily for people who are members of MDF or on the path to membership.

The reasoning for this position is that we shepherd the people of our own church. People who belong to other churches should be shepherded by their own shepherds.

To be a member of MDF one must first take a class called Values and Vision. In the Values and Vision class a person will learn what we believe, what we value, how we might be different from other churches and what the vision for our church is.

Upon completion of the class a person may become a member and then join a community group. In that way we ensure that members share the values and vision of our church. We are in that sense exclusive.

However, we also have a desire to be missional.

A group leader or leaders have the discretion to invite non-Christian's to their groups or Christians they believe have made a commitment to MDF (the path to membership). In this way the Community Group can be an entry point to MDF rather than MDF being an entry point to a Community Group.

6. How does a member of MDF get into a community group and can a member choose the community group they want to get into.

MDF members can get into a community group by making their desire known to a group leader or member of the pastoral staff, in particular P. Bruce who makes the final placement decision.

As a general rule we would seek to accommodate a person's request for a particular group. There are however a number of variables that factor into a final decision.

Here is a partial list of variables that are considered:

- a. Current size of the requested group and space considerations
- b. Availability of a group that meets the time requested

7. Is there a waiting list to get into a Community Group?

Yes, there can be.

Because there are limitations on the number of groups, the times they meet and where they meet it's possible a person may have to wait for placement.

In such cases people are encouraged to attend P. Matt's Ask Me Anything Bible Study that he normally holds twice a week. Here a person can get their Bible questions answered, get to know the Sr. Pastor and enjoy some level of fellowship with other member and attenders of MDF. (Many people are in existing Community Groups and go to the Ask Me Anything Bible Study as well.)

8. How many Community Groups are there and when do they meet?

Currently there are 7 community groups. All meet in Kenosha. Six groups meet on Sundays, some after the church service and some around dinner time. One group meets on Wednesdays.

Meeting places can be a variable because some groups rotate through host homes. On occasion a group may meet at church if space is an issue. One group meets at church permanently for that reason.

It needs to be noted that the groups meet at a certain time and space at the leader's discretion. Leader availability is the determining factor of where and when a group meets.

9. How many people are in a Community Group?

The answer to this question is a variable. Group size is determined by the available leaders, the space they have to hold a meeting plus the number of children that may also be present. It does mean, that at times, a group is physically unable to absorb more people.

The norm seems to be about 8-16 adults in a group. An average of 12 would probably be optimum.

10. How is a new group started?

Starting a new group can be an exciting experience and is dependent on leadership development. Group leaders arise from within existing groups. When two apprentice leaders are ready to start another group we start one.

Our goal is two have two leaders in each Community Group as well as other men being mentored toward group leadership by the existing group leaders.