

## WHAT IS A GRACE SMALL GROUP? | FOR SMALL GROUP MEMBERS

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People visit church for thousands of personal reasons, but they stay for only ONE: Community. Church growth professionals and statisticians have found that if a guest does not connect with at least three people in the first three weeks of attending, they will leave; and if they haven't connected with a "small group" at the church, the likelihood of them becoming a member of the church is lower than 15%.

These facts, combined with our thirty years of trial and error, has taught us that Grace Church must grow in our smaller, intimate settings, while we grow larger in our weekend gatherings. It's all about connection. Grace Church has always been committed to Small Group Ministry. We are seeing more people than ever discover the joyful fulfillment of sharing life together with a small group of people – people who have enough similarities to feel comfortable, but enough differences to find hope and help for life's challenges.

Grace Church has continued to grow since its inception in 1989, confirming the need to "grow smaller, as we grow larger." In 1997 Grace started its Small Group Ministry. It is the philosophy of Grace that the pastors' job is to equip the people to do ministry, enabling Small Group Hosts to step up and care for a smaller group of people. Each small group member of Grace benefits beyond measure as their life is enriched through fellowship, accountability, and spiritual growth.

Our Elders have created this small group environment to provide a ministry that best parallels the early New Testament Church in Acts 2:42-48. God's plan for the Church is both large weekend teachings and small close settings – to help every believer live out the purposes of God in their community, while building eternal relationships with others.

Small groups provide opportunities for believers to learn from each other as they apply the truth of the Bible within the security of relationships. While it is critical to hear from the pulpit, our personal spiritual growth is a lifelong process; and it is very difficult to traverse on our own. We need a place to learn, ask questions, and wrestle through each question face-to-face. We need people who are willing to get to know us, so they can help us walk with Christ more faithfully.

Spiritual growth happens better with others, in community, with open lines of communication and freedom to speak into one another's lives.