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The purpose of this Community Group Guide is to provide group leaders with an adaptation of the Community Group model by Brad House, for FBC.

This summary can be also used to help train new Community Group leaders

We are using much of the Community vision, strategy and terminology, because we find it a compelling model for church ministry in our culture, which is so far removed from traditional and even contemporary 'church'.

We have tried to describe the strategy and functions with a mind to our own unique situation. Not every aspect has been followed since our implementation as we follow the Spirit's lead over the past few years. Coaching in particular has been the task of a pastor, as the original coaching vision changed when we planted the Parrsboro church. Going forward, the FBC board will shepherd CGroup leaders.

The Appendix job descriptions and worksheets follow the documents House provided.

A. COMMUNITY GROUPS - FOUNDATIONS

1. COMMUNITY: Reason and Purpose

There are many reasons that could be given why community is important. Some common answers to the “why we do community” question might be discipleship, care, friendship, or church growth. While these answers are important byproducts of community, they are just that: byproducts. We can’t take the fruit of healthy, gospel-centered community and turn it into the **reason** why we do it. Our foundational basis for why we have community groups in our church is to image our God (as *‘image-bearers’*, Gen.1:26), and proclaim the good news of what Jesus has accomplished for us on the cross.

By imaging or reflecting God, what we mean is this: the God of this Bible is Trinitarian, and the Father, Son and Holy Spirit have eternally existed in relationship with one another as one God in three persons. Because we are created in the image of God, we were made to exist in community as God does. This is why community groups are essential to the Christian life. We were built to function in relationship with one another and with God.

Reflecting the image of God was a gift to mankind that was not shared with any other created being. Yet it is a gift that we forfeited through sin and rebellion. Sin always separates what God joins together and the result is isolation, division, and fragmentation. Christians certainly aren’t the only ones to lament the fragmentation of society. Christian or not, we all have an intrinsic need for community. We all suffer from the isolation that sin breeds.

What sin has broken, Jesus has reconciled. Apart from Jesus’ death and resurrection, community is not possible. 2 Corinthians 5:18 says that God reconciled the world to himself through the cross of Christ. Not only are we reconciled to God through the cross, we are joined together in community. Additionally, Ephesians 2:19-20 says this: *“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.”* Community is for us a declaration of the overwhelming love of God, a tangible proclamation of the reconciling work of the cross. This is a truly compelling reason to build community groups within our churches.

Once we understand the real reason why we do community, now we can look at the **purpose** community serves. Jesus states the purpose for the church plainly in Matthew 28:19: go and make disciples. A disciple is a follower of Jesus, reflecting the image of God through identity in Jesus, and expressing that identity through worship to God, community in church, and mission in the world. We gather in community groups with our friends and neighbors to live life together and experience the gospel in ways we can’t on our own. Community Groups are a place to wrestle with the truths of the Bible, love one another, pray for others, serve the area, and participate in the mission of God for FBC.

There is a reason that the New Testament is littered with commands to love, teach, admonish, and rebuke one another. By discipling one another we are not only learning, but also we are teaching the gospel. Instead of one teacher with many disciples, we create a community of disciples who are discipling one another. Teachers have long known that this is the best way to learn because you must know your subject well to teach it to others. In this way, as the Word is preached and then applied in community, we can disciple an entire population effectively and efficiently.

2. COMMUNITY GROUP VISION - What Is A Community Group?

Jesus has a compelling vision for reconciling people to God and one another. In Mt.16:18 the people of God are those who confess faith in Christ, the Truth and Rock of our salvation. In Mt.28:19, He gives us our mission to go and make disciples. In John 13:34-35, we find the glue that holds the gospel and the mission together: a transformed community filled with the supernatural love of God. The church will reach people and grow as we live the life of Jesus and authentically love one another. When this happens, people see it and are drawn to it, as in Acts 2:42-47.

Community defined is living together the life of reconciliation to God through the gospel of Jesus Christ and loving one another in the power of the Holy Spirit for the glory of God. A Community Group is disciples who find their identity in Jesus, worship God together, learn His word, accept and care for one another, spur each other toward godliness, and own the mission to see more people know Jesus. It is a lifestyle of discipleship.

A Community Group is a group of disciples who do life together for the purpose of sanctification and glory to God. Consequently we expect that the same attributes of a disciple would be present in community. A Community Group is not an event. It's a lifestyle of discipleship. Our groups gather each week as the whole church body for worship, proclamation of the word and fellowship.

The Community Group **vision** is to practice a lifestyle of following Jesus and loving one another in local groups of disciples who get involved in the lives of their neighbours to reach them with the gospel. We seek to develop deeper relationships with one another over the long-term and invite others from the communities we live, into the community of Christ which we share. We are putting teaching and discipling, shepherding and caring plus teamwork and mission into our Community Groups ministry.

3. COMMUNITY GROUP STRATEGY

a) **MISSIONAL CALLING:** Acts 1:8

We are given a missional calling with a local, regional, national and world-wide strategy. Our main part in reaching the world is to see our Minas Shore / Cobequid Bay region transformed by the gospel and see the name of Jesus exalted. The people of FBC come from Parrsboro to Truro and beyond. The emphasis to reach our region will be with mission-minded geographic Community Groups. Some will also be affinity groups that accommodate people with similar life-situations. All will seek to build deeper relationships that promote belonging and reach out to those around them.

The Local Community / Neighborhood Approach

This is a simple and yet effective approach. Although your Community Group may not be able to serve the whole region, it can serve your local community or neighborhood. If the other groups do the same, eventually we can reach the region. What makes this more significant is the fact that your group can reach people who would be unlikely to come to a church service. You have an opportunity to reach out to the lost with your group at a deeper and more practical level than a church service ever could, and therefore reach people with the gospel. As the whole church and Community Groups work together, our region will never be the same.

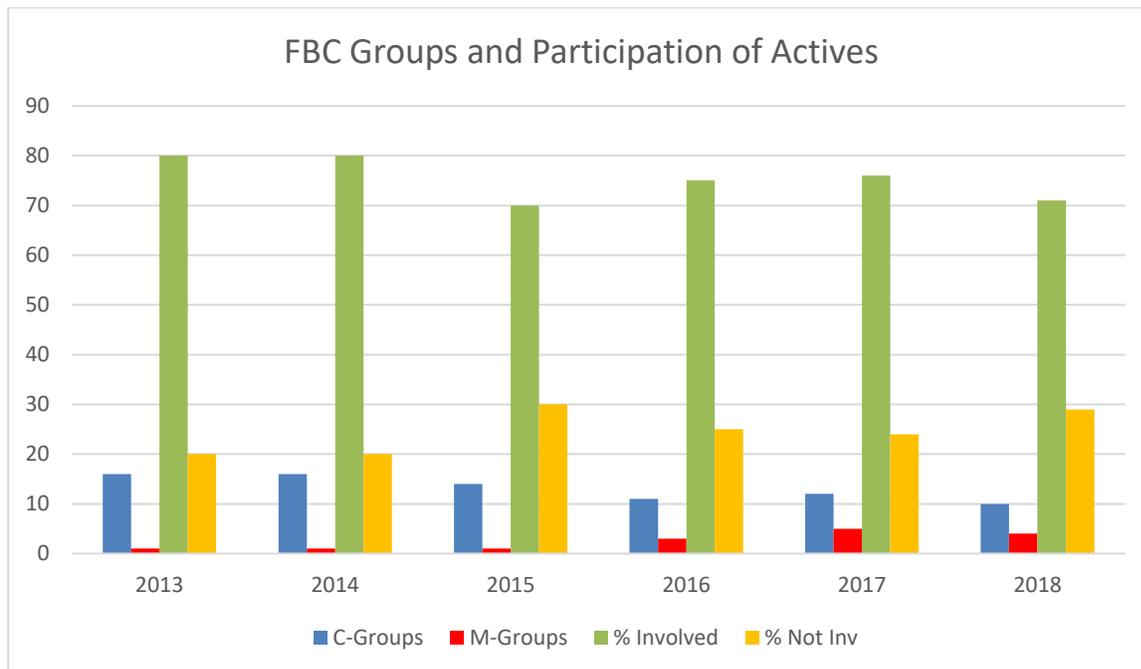
Our Geography - Region, Area and Communities

The Lord has grown FBC over the years into a broad-based church, with people coming from the whole Minas Shore / Cobequid Bay region and beyond. The Lord has given us a measure of effectiveness in the gospel and we have the calling and responsibility to do our best for Jesus Christ. It is unrealistic to suppose we can grow without doing a better job at making disciples who remain and reproduce. Thus, the leading we have received from God to re-structure our ministry so we can make more disciples who reproduce other disciples. We termed this as a 'ReBoot' in 2013 and adopted the Community model.

This large Region can be readily broken down into several distinct Areas, within which are several Communities. For our purposes, we will use community to describe our group life, and communities or neighbourhoods to define the place our groups exist. The general geographic division is as follows:

- Minas Shore - GreatVillage/Londonderry - Glenholme/Masstown - Debert/Onslow - Truro/BibleHill

This chart shows our group numbers and participation rates from 2013 to 2018. Note that as affinity groups arise, the number of community groups decline. This is in part due to "vision-slipping", and also the busy church program schedule we have. FBC needs to evaluate the priority of Community going forward. The Community model needs our best leaders functioning as Community Group leaders and coaches if groups are to truly thrive in discipleship, caring and mission.



MGroups = ongoing miscellaneous or affinity /gender groups that function like community groups

Notes

2013: 17 CGroups - Launch of Community Groups - 80% participation of actives

2014: 16 CGroups

2015: 14 CGroups - Open Arms church plant begins - Debert participation decline - 70% participation

2016: 11 CGroups + 3 new MGroups: College/Career - Senior Teen + BILD

2017: 12 CGroups + 5 MGroups (2 new ladies groups: Kathy, Laura)

2018: 10 CGroups + 4 MGroups - about 70% participation

b) **COACHING STRUCTURE:** 2Tim.2:2.

We began with adopting the Community coaching structure to shepherd and equip leaders. Due to the Parrsboro church plant and some other leaders stepping back, the Community Pastor did the role of equipping and shepherding group leaders. One leader trying to shepherd too many leaders is ineffective. FBC Board members will help to fulfill this role in 2018-2019 as this pastor retires. Ideally, we need a coach for every 6 leaders. The Community Group organizational structure is as follows:

- Each group functions as a team of Christ's servants
- Each group has a leader
- Each leader has a coach responsible for up to 6 leaders
- Each coach has a head coach/community pastor, responsible for several coaches

Benefits of Structure

Structure is necessary in the church because the Living God has built order into every aspect of life. He is not a God of disorder, (Acts 6:1-7, 1Cor.14:33, Ja.3:16). In our fallen universe, entropy (the tendency to disorganization) must be constantly overcome by input of energy. Oversight and guidance at all levels is Biblical and necessary, but it is not to be micro-management. Brad House says: *"when I advocate for natural, organic community, I am advocating for community that has enough structure to support the healthy expression of the gospel without stifling creativity and authenticity... Bringing order to chaos is a way we image the goodness of God."* (Community -p.172-173).

The FBC Community Group structure is basically group, leader, coach, and pastor. Community groups are teams that consist of members who get an opportunity to lead at their levels of calling and maturity. Group leaders are responsible to see that the main functions of the groups are carried out, through oversight, equipping and delegation. Coaches are responsible to oversee several groups in a geographic area, by shepherding, equipping, resourcing and networking. The 'ReBoot Vision' is a Community Group Pastor functioning as part of the pastoral team which is under the authority of the church board. This pastor is to shepherd, equip and resource several area coaches in conjunction with the pastoral team.

What this structure should facilitate is a better span-of-care than what we have had in the past and a greater system for supporting and maintaining growth. God wants to bear through us *"fruit that remains."*(John 15:16). As group members are more involved in making disciples, they will bear fruit. We need apprentice or co-leaders to be developed within the group so that as the group grows, a new group can be replicated. Jesus had 12 disciples, so that is our benchmark for group leaders. The coach will oversee several group leaders in a geographic area. As people are reached and groups increase, we will need more coaches. All this pre-supposes how the church plans to resource the Community model.

c) **INSPIRE OWNERSHIP:** 1Pet.2:9-12

Ownership is inspired by lifting up Jesus through our weekly corporate worship, which becomes more important than ever. Groups will also have opportunity to share testimonies during worship. Ownership is inspired as group leaders lead from the edge - making decisions on the front lines as necessary, while in keeping with the values and mission of FBC. We are de-centralizing some of our ministry functions and giving the responsibility of leaders and their groups to make necessary ministry decisions to reach their communities. Leaders will work with their coach to make the necessary ministry decisions to be effective in teaching, caring and mission within the FBC framework.

Ownership is inspired by raising expectations. Jesus calls every disciple and every believer has a calling and gifting to serve Him. Groups should be like a team of servants, each one doing their part. We expect

the Spirit-led priesthood of believers to be adequate to do the vine-work of the gospel. In other words, the fact that we are given the privilege of direct access to God through Christ means we have the resources we need to fulfill our ministry calling. Each one is connected, gifted and equipped in Christ to teach someone, care for someone and reach someone. Vine-work is people work: shepherding and influencing someone to be a faithful reproducing disciple of Jesus.

While most community groups will ideally be geographic and local community based, some groups will tend to be an affinity of lifestyle situations. This could be in the context of a young families group, where they get together as families and accomplish the functions of a community group. Some might be a hub for teen discipleship. Some seniors may form a group and work with another community group for outreach in the local area. Key concepts like ownership of the disciple-making mission and leading-from-the-edge will lead community groups to decide with their coaches and pastors how to best function as a group in their local context. All groups should follow the Community vision and strategy but not all groups will be the same. This should also inspire teamwork and ownership.

In short, a community group functions like the church, but yet is connected to the larger church body. Leaders are under the church's authority, and are accountable for their group's function and teaching. Together we are much stronger as a church body than as individual groups. All contribute to the body and benefit from what only the body together can do. The group ministry enables us to take the mission of Christ to far more people and places. The group can adjust their ministry to their neighbourhood culture and the Lord's calling. What could be accomplished with Spirit-filled groups!

B. COMMUNITY GROUP FUNCTIONS

New Testament discipleship is about shepherding people toward maturity. It is making reproducing disciples who in turn make other disciples. It is likened to a stream: continuous, lifelong and subject to life's changing currents and seasons. The umbrella of discipleship includes the group functions of teaching, prayer, discipling new believers, equipping disciples, and it also involves caring and sending. We seek to have disciples be all that their Lord created and called them to be. We also want to instill in them the ownership of the overall mission that Jesus gave us.

Each group is responsible for teaching, prayer, caring, and mission - for their neighbourhood as well as their group. The Lord is leading us to raise the expectations of every member, leader and group. We are excited by the concept of every member doing vital ministry! This should in turn motivate all of us to rely more on the Spirit of God. The group leader is the shepherd of the group, responsible to see that the group functions are carried out. Leaders should delegate many of these functions to others who are gifted in the particular area. Our goal is for groups to function as a coordinated and effective ministry team. We expect a partnership between all leaders, groups and church body. We envision groups expressing true authentic Biblical community in whatever way best reaches their community.

1. TEACHING THE WORD

Bible Teaching will have prominence in our community groups. While there will be times groups will want to do a curriculum or book study, we want the Bible to be the main 'text-book'. While the leader or teacher may utilize a book to aid their study, when the Bible is the group text then everyone can learn something from the Holy Spirit. Seekers can be invited in at any time. New believers can be disciplined in a group setting as a Bible passage is studied and discussed. The mature in the group can dig deeper. The beauty is that everyone is looking at the same Bible text. Some church seasons will see groups doing a sermon-based Bible study. Other times, groups can do a study tailored to their situation.

The group leader is responsible for the teaching ministry of their group. Sharing the teaching ministry will grow your members. Some necessary guidelines will help ensure our overall church unity and effectiveness in the group. Foundational will be your faithfulness to the FBC doctrine, values and mission and be accountable to the church for all teaching. Your pastors and coaches will do all they can to adequately train and resource you and your group. Keep in mind that some groups, due to their makeup and schedules will need to be creative in how and when they teach.

- a) Follow the church's seasons of sermon-based group teaching. Sermon based study will flow out of and be complimentary to the weekly pulpit message. The benefit of this is to connect the Lord's direction to the pastors for the church, through Bible teaching and discussion on a group level. It is similar to what Jesus did when He taught the masses and explained the fine points to His disciples.

Here are some guidelines for sermon-based teaching:

- The pastors will prepare sermon texts and/or curriculum that will require groups to follow a basic inductive study and discussion outline.
- The leaders or those designated to teach should follow the **general study format** of:
 - **OPENING:** prayer for the Lord's leading and reading the Scripture passage from the sermon
 - **OBSERVATION:** group discuss people and events that make up the content/background,
 - identify key terms and statements and discuss their significance to the passage
 - consider other Scriptures that bring clarity and perspective (avoid rabbit trails)
 - **INTERPRETATION:** ask participants to identify the central point and then share with group
 - develop a consensus on the central point, keeping it consistent with the text and sermon
 - **APPLICATION:** an interactive sharing and discussing of questions for personal application
 - appropriate prayer should follow after individuals' share, to provide immediacy and caring
- The Bible will be the book used to involve anyone. Teachers may refer to other resources.
- Training will be given so teachers can lead an Inductive Bible study and facilitate learning, through effective Biblical discussion.
- A variety of FBC resources will be available to leaders to help them be accurate in teaching.

- b) Discern with the group which other studies will be pertinent to the growth of the group:

- FBC may at times offer training, seminars or courses to help meet the variety of church needs.
- Keeping in mind our practice of a church-wide campaign and some seasonal sermon-based studies, groups will be able at other times to choose the type of study they desire, for growth or outreach. These studies will be approved and resourced through the pastors and coach.
- Study times should be interspersed with lots of fellowship, projects, outreach and fun. In other words, community groups are not just about learning, and not just formal learning. Discipling can take place when people discuss and live the truths of God in informal contexts.

Discipling New Believers

This will be accomplished by 1-on-1 mentoring in the context of the family dynamic of the group. This new believer will become a part of the group - invited into it, loved and accepted by it. The leader will enlist a mentor from the group to walk with the new believer and help get them established in their walk with Christ. Hopefully the mentor will be the friend who was influential in their coming to Christ, or with a connection to them.

The FBC Discipling Plan is based upon a 3-part series entitled: 'Called to Follow' – 'Equipped to Grow' – 'Sent to Serve'. These guides teach the essentials of following Christ and are best accomplished in a 1-on-1 context. The group dynamic should reinforce these essentials as well as providing general teaching, equipping and sending of disciples into group and personal ministry. Discipleship will also include pastoral equipping for church membership, on-going growth and for some, leadership training.

Every member is expected to be a follower and a servant of Christ and should be equipped for ministry. All should be able to effectively share the gospel with someone and help disciple/mentor a new believer in the manner they are taught. The dynamic of the group is that we can live a lifestyle of learning with practical serving in close relationships - just as Jesus did. So we can look beyond the traditional small group model and embrace our responsibility to consider the discipleship needs of all our people, whether children, teens, the hurting, and especially the lost.

2. PRAYER LIFE

Prayer will become more of a feature of all groups so they can fulfill their ministry. It should have a new prominence so we can demonstrate our active dependence upon the Lord to do any spiritual work, whether discipling, caring or mission work. Prayer lines can be group based - we can be kept up to date with our neighbourhood prayer needs. We can have prayer walks through our neighbourhood. We can pray with people right when the need arises and in their homes. Imagine the outcomes if we devoted ourselves to prayer as a team for the salvation of our neighbours.

Suggested Prayer Practices:

- Each group will benefit by having a prayer coordinator - someone who has the burden for prayer and the desire to involve others, with the capacity to lead others effectively in praying. Seek to have prayer be home-based, not just meeting based.
- Prayer should be a feature whenever you gather, and undergird your group's entire ministry.
- An important practice of group life and worship is having songs and/or scripture and especially prayer in such a way as to bring the awareness of the presence of God into the group. This is a vital and often overlooked ministry, and something all of us need to be attuned to the Lord.
- Have a group prayer line and be attuned to the prayer needs of all the people around you.
- Be creative with prayer: take prayer walks, have extended prayer times (ie. a ½ day of prayer)
- Make it a priority to model for your group to learn to share personal blessings and struggles.
- Pray right when the need arises, such as when people share personal needs and struggles in the teaching-application time. When someone prays for another right after they share, the immediacy heightens group attention and personal compassion.
- Pray when you visit, pray together for your neighbours, pray immediately so you won't forget.

3. CARING FOR ONE ANOTHER

One of the vital functions of a Biblical leader is shepherding. The limits to pastoral care are directly related to 'span-of-care.' One person can only effectively care for a small number - Jesus set the precedent of 12. We are asking our coaches to shepherd leaders, our leaders to shepherd our people and our people to shepherd others. Every member is called to care for others, in the group and community, with genuine empathy and dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Community Groups actively and graciously practice the New Testament 'one-another's.' We accept one another (Rom.15:5-7), we have equal concern for each other (1Cor.12:25), we comfort those in any trouble (2Cor.1:4), we carry each other's burdens (Gal.6:2), we love each other deeply (1Pet.4:8). In so doing we will fulfill the mandate Jesus gave in John 13:14-15, to wash one another's feet, and so manifest His life to the world (John 13:34-35). This level of caring necessitates the building of close, long-term relationships.

Discipleship also involves confession and repentance as part the Fellowship of a vital Spirit-filled community. We want to be close enough to others so we can share our hearts. Our community groups should be full of grace and mercy, abounding in love and faithfulness. Those who have particular struggles should not have to suffer in silence because they think no one else struggles. We all wrestle with sin and hardships. The mature can demonstrate this reality by honest transparency and sharing. Groups should not be therapy sessions or dominated by one person's life - some 1-on-1 may suit this need better. But we need to be able to share what the Lord is convicting us about and asking for prayer in the areas where we have habitual sin. We must love one another enough so that we can bear real burdens, admonish disobedience, encourage repentance and work patiently with people.

Effective caring involves teamwork. Those with the gift of *mercy* can make a difference caring for those in their group and neighbourhood. Caring and helping are not limited to pastors or professionals. When genuine empathy is given with dependence on the Holy Spirit, He can use us to help others. Concerned stable couples can give quality marriage advice. Sensitive young and older adults can be a great encouragement to lonely teens. The older can come alongside the younger and offer the wisdom of their life journey. Men can sharpen other men, and women other women. Those with particularly difficult struggles may need to be referred by the leader to the coach or pastor.

Groups also need those gifted with *hospitality* to host the group and invite people to outreach expressions of the group. Those who are the most *socially minded* can promote further relationship connections. The *organizer* in the group can help with group administrative details. They can also be connected with the '*FBC Website and FBC Church App*' to further our relationships and body life. The *hands-on* people can be the ones to spear-head practical projects and the group invites others into them. Every member thus has a necessary ministry. As a community group, we consider together what the Lord has gifted and called each of us to do and wed this to the people and needs around us.

4. ADMINISTRATION

Caring also requires organizing and administration, as does the other vital ministry functions of prayer, teaching and mission. It will be to the leaders and groups' advantage to have a gifted member help with any administration needs, particularly if it is not the leaders' strong suit. Encourage your members to use this current social media to build community without making it seem like just more work. If there is life in it, it will be life-giving to those who are involved in it. Where spiritual life is lacking, ask the Holy Spirit to fill us. (Eph.3:14-21).

5. MISSION TO THE COMMUNITY.

Acts 13:2 calls us to ensure prayer has priority in Mission. We have to avoid the tendency to emphasize planning and minimize seeking God. Worship or ministering to the Lord means praise and worship in song, scripture, prayer and fasting. Unless we devote ourselves to prayer, we can't expect much. We need to pray for unity, protection, for the Spirit to work community within us, guide us and convict the people we want to reach.

In Acts 13:1-3, we see God bringing together a gifted team to get something started. The Community Group is a gifted team that shares mission. First, we need to identify the gifts and callings of the group members, so we know the makeup of our team. Who the Lord has brought together in your community group will help shape the mission of the group. God has strategically called us and placed us in our neighbourhood for His greater purpose. We are His key people! This inspires ownership in all of us.

Another group benefit is team evangelism. Those who are introverts can team with the extroverts, and be empowered to plant and share the gospel. Someone who feels inadequate to share the good news effectively with a friend can bring along a group member who has just the right approach. Our individual testimony is enlarged when the group has a team attitude and has built a solid reputation. None of this happens overnight. We need to be in this for the long haul if we hope to see people and neighbourhoods won to Christ. Yet, we can work toward something truly profound - the transformation of culture.

The early missionaries did **missiology** - they sought and went with the Spirit's guidance and looked for opportunities. Missiology seeks to understand the people and the community context. It seeks to discern what the Lord wants the group to do to reach out. To understand the people, discuss as a group and answer these questions:

- ✓ Who are they? Where do they hang out? What do they do?
- ✓ What do they value and believe? What are their spiritual sources?

The group will consider the natural rhythms and spaces of their community: what activities they could join, what projects they take on. What we do will vary from group and community. Look at your team in conjunction with the people and opportunities that already exist in the community. For instance, local volunteers tend to be in short supply and our involvement in helping allows us to rub shoulders with the people we are trying to reach. There is usually an opportunity in the realm of community centers, seasonal festivals, children's activities, or backyard Bible clubs etc. Many seniors could use our help and our groups can develop a reputation for helping and caring that the Lord can use to open doors for the gospel. Many rural areas are forgotten by government and the church can seize the opportunity to make a difference. The big need that isolated people have today is being part of a real authentic loving community - something we can do well in the power of the Spirit.

We are encouraging a 'bite-sized' concept of mission. Groups can grasp and realize the Lord's plan for their communities more easily than for the whole region. Every believer has a part in it. After the group prays and does their missiology analysis, then they come up with a specific Mission Plan. The leader runs this plan by their coach who can help equip and resource, and perhaps suggest networking with other groups. It is very important for leaders to work with coaches/pastors on their mission. What we must do is build deeper relationships, invite people into our community of Christ, give the Lord time to work, and take the natural opportunities to share the gospel of Jesus. Remember that while acts of love and kindness set the table for the gospel, only the message of the gospel can save a soul. Ultimately, this is the main goal of our Community Groups: sharing the gospel in the power of the Spirit and making reproducing disciples.

C. JOB DESCRIPTIONS

COMMUNITY GROUP - LEADER

ORIENTATION: toward group members and the community or neighbourhood

QUALIFICATIONS: Strong in Character, Leadership Calling, Teach-ability

- member of FBC, committed to the purpose, vision and values of the church
- mature and growing disciple of Jesus and well grounded in Scripture
- genuine love for people along with demonstrated relational skills
- ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walk with the Lord
- humble demeanor and teachable spirit; consistent and reliable
- able to communicate with warmth and graciousness in a way that is clear and understandable
- solid reputation (above reproach) inside and outside the church, meeting requirements of 1Tim.3
- willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader of the church (James 3:1)
- ability to lead about +/- 12 people

RESPONSIBILITIES - Group Functions

As a Shepherd, care for and lead your community group toward growth as fruitful disciples of Jesus. Although you are not required to be the agent for the following functions for every member of your group, you should take responsibility to make sure each item is occurring. Delegate roles to the gifted members in your group. Ensure prayer has a major role in all aspects of the group. With your group develop a Group Vision and Covenant that defines the purpose, teamwork and mission. All group leaders will be required to attend FBC Community Group training events with coaches and pastors.

Teaching: know the members of your group and encourage growth through using FBC resources

- call on group members to shepherd one another and provide a challenging, grace-filled atmosphere
- share the teaching with those who are qualified and the ministry with those appropriately gifted
- facilitate fellowship times with Scripture, prayer, worship, confession and repentance
- designate members of your group for 1-on-1 discipleship with new or non-believers

Caring: see that pastoral care is provided and refer difficult situations to your coach

- encourage people to become committed members of the church and address lapsed expectations of members, such as community involvement, service, corporate worship and giving
- employ a caring attitude such as that of a family, where non-involvements are quickly followed up
- take note of the "widows and orphans" in the neighbourhood, to help and encourage them

Mission: lead your group in the mission to the neighbourhood with your key community people

- create a group plan in conjunction with your coach's neighbourhood and area plan
- cast vision, understand the people in the community and pursue opportunities for involvement
- network through your coach with other groups in your area, with large projects and key seasons
- grow your group through mission efforts and seek to replicate to advance gospel opportunities
- develop future leaders by apprenticing gifted members of your group

Administration: organize and plan so that your group functions well - using the FBC online community

- maintain group information and contact list, and clear communication to the group and your coach
- provide clear expectations and safe places to gather

JOB DESCRIPTION: COMMUNITY GROUP - COACH

ORIENTATION

Toward leaders and area

QUALIFICATIONS: Strong in Character, Leadership Calling, Teach-ability

- member of FBC, committed to the purpose, vision and values of the church
- mature and growing disciple of Jesus and well grounded in Scripture
- genuine love for people along with demonstrated relational skills
- ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walk with the Lord
- humble demeanor and teachable spirit; consistent and reliable
- able to communicate with warmth and graciousness in a way that is clear and understandable
- solid reputation (above reproach) inside and outside the church, meeting requirements of 1Tim.3
- willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader of the church (James 3:1)
- ability to lead about +/- 6 group leaders

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Training:

All coaches will be required to attend periodic FBC Community Group training events with the group leaders and pastors, which will involve learning and discussion between coaches and their group leaders. Sufficient time will be allotted at these meetings for coaches to meet and discuss the ministry with their leaders.

Shepherd:

- care for the leaders in your area (regular contact, close communication, sensing needs etc)
- shepherd leaders in areas of spiritual, family, vocational and physical health
- coach leaders in their shepherding of their groups
- address appropriate levels of care and discipline within groups in your care

Mission:

- own the mission, replication, and leadership development for your groups
- coach leaders in opportunities to engage in the neighbourhood
- participate in prayer for your area
- challenge and help leaders think through alternative rhythms
- mobilize groups for cooperative hospitality, service and participation events
- work with your pastor to develop an area plan

Administration:

- organize and plan so that your groups function well together in your area
- ensure each group has a Group Plan that is aligned with the Area Plan
- track and ensure apprentice leadership in each of your groups
- help develop, review and approve Replication Plans for each of your groups

JOB DESCRIPTION: COMMUNITY GROUP - PASTOR

ORIENTATION

Toward coaches and areas

QUALIFICATIONS: Strong in Character, Leadership Calling, Teach-ability

- member of FBC, committed to the purpose, vision and values of the church
- mature and growing disciple of Jesus and well grounded in Scripture
- genuine love for people along with demonstrated relational skills
- ability to both challenge and encourage others in their walk with the Lord
- humble demeanor and teachable spirit; consistent and reliable
- able to communicate with warmth and graciousness in a way that is clear and understandable
- solid reputation (above reproach) inside and outside the church, meeting requirements of 1Tim.3
- willing to be judged with greater strictness as a leader of the church (James 3:1)
- ability to lead several coaches and group leaders

RESPONSIBILITIES:

Training:

The pastor will organize and resource periodic FBC Community Group training events with the coaches and group leaders. This will involve pastor-led teaching and facilitated discussion with practical application between coaches and their group leaders.

Shepherd

- care for the coaches in your area
- shepherd coaches in areas of spiritual, family, vocational and physical health
- help coaches in their shepherding of their leaders
- address appropriate levels of care and discipline within groups in your care

Mission:

- develop an Area Plan with the help of your coaches and leaders
- lead your areas in prayer for the advancement of the gospel
- own the mission, replication, and leadership development for your areas
- ensure mission ownership throughout your areas
- mobilize groups for cooperative hospitality, service and participation events

Administration:

- help organize and plan at the community /neighbourhood level to ensure progress in stated goals
- ensure progress toward goals set in the Community and Area plans
- track and ensure apprentice leadership and Replication Plans in your areas

D. COMMUNITY GROUP PLANNING

COMMUNITY GROUP STRATEGIC PLAN - Leaders worksheet

INFORMATION (the job titles are optional and dependent on the group focus and vision)

- >>give a copy of this to your coach - extra sheets are in the Guide Appendix -up-date it as necessary
- >>all group members contact and ministry info should be listed on your FBC Online community (ccb).
- >>use this to build your team by discussing roles, goals, group vision /covenant and opportunities

Area:

Coach:

Community:

Leader:

Co-leader:

Missiologist / key community person(s)

Host & Location:

Social Coordinator:

Prayer Coordinator:

Administrator:

1-on1 Discipling:

Other:

GOALS AND PROJECTIONS (realistic goals for the group to consider)

Group Vision and Covenant:

Culture or people group focus:

Numbers of groups we want to see replicated this year to reach more people in our neighbourhood:

Number of people that our group is praying will come to Christ this year through the group:

Names of people that our group is praying will come to Christ this year through the group:

OPPORTUNITIES AND IDEAS (for relationship building both within the group and the community)

Participation (building relationships)

Service (loving the people)

Hospitality (invitation to join in community)

Fellowship (prayer, Bible, Confession, repentance)

COMMUNITY GROUP REPLICATION PLAN - Leaders worksheet

By **replication**, we mean the development of a new community group from the current group. The following goals and steps can help with how we should envision and develop new groups. The timing is set by the Lord, but we can be ready with a plan for replication when He moves.

INFORMATION

Community Group Coach:

Community Group Leader:

Apprentice / Co-leader:

Community or Neighbourhood:

REPLICATION GOALS

1. Advance the gospel of Jesus Christ and plant more communities
2. Provide more opportunities for people to see and experience the gospel.
3. Continue to create compassion for those who don't know Jesus or don't have community.
4. Grow as disciples and make new disciples.

REPLICATION VISION

How many people do we pray for?

When do we want to replicate to achieve the above goals?

Who or what is our mission field?

Who are our potential leadership apprentices?

Where are our potential host sites?

STEPS FOR REPLICATION READINESS (being ready to start a new group as growth comes)

1. Identify Apprentice
2. Vision for Group
3. Core Group
4. Host Location (mission before opportunity)
5. Replication Timeline

Potential dates when the apprentice leads the group, a replication party, and a launch date.

Date:

Event:

Location:

COACH AREA PLAN:

By **Area Plan** we mean how you as coach will coordinate your leaders so that groups are networked and ministry is maximized in your area. It should be an on-going discussion with your leaders and take into account the uniqueness, vision and strategic plan of each group.

INFORMATION (give the community pastor an updated copy of your area plan)

Area:

Coach:

Groups in our Area: have an up-dated copy of each Group Information and Strategic Plan

Community Group Locations and Leaders Names:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

AREA RESOURCES

Locations of Natural Community:

Service and Event Agencies:

Local Papers and Newsletters:

GOALS

Vision for our Area: have an up-dated copy of each Group Replication Plan

How many people are we praying to see come to Christ through community groups in the next year?

Number of potential groups in 1-2 years:

How many apprentices or new leaders do we need in the next year or two?

Networking Opportunities of Groups for Specific Projects:

E. APPENDIX

Appendix:

note: training materials will be added to this appendix during the scheduled training events

1. Team Building pg18
2. Template for Sermon-Based Bible Study + FBC Teaching Resources pg19-20
3. Community Group Prayer pg21-22
4. Missiology: Building Community and Reaching Community pg23-24
5. Pastoral Care pg25-26

1. TEAM BUILDING

GROUP MINISTRY VISION

The Community Group vision is for each group to function as a team of servants of Christ's mission. It is common for people to rely on leaders to cast the vision, come up with the ideas and then organize the work. Often the leader finds they are doing most of the work - a situation we want to change. We seek to have the ministry of teaching, prayer, discipling, caring and mission outreach shared. Teamwork necessitates that leaders ensure that three keys things happen to their groups:

- a) Lead by gradually giving away the ministry - follow Jesus' 3 phases of discipling the twelve:
 - "come and see"- John 1:39: tell them 'what' and 'why' about Jesus and His mission
 - "come and follow Me" - Mark 1:17: show them how to do ministry and do it with them
 - "come and be with Me"- Mark 3:14: let them do ministry, evaluate them and deploy them
- b) Let the group set their particular vision for group ministry, within the FBC Community vision.
 - as leaders we have our ministry ideals, but for the group to work as a team, the personal makeup of the members and their burdens, through discussion should set the ministry tone
 - doing together the BEST study on personal calling and serving can help the group know one another's heart and help the leader and the group understand how God is leading them
- c) Inspire ownership by enlisting them to carry out their ministry ideas for people and projects.
 - if we enlist their ideas of who to reach out to or what projects to take on, and then give them direct responsibility for this, it will inspire ownership and they will tend to rise to the challenge

GROUP PRACTICES

The following can help the group gel as a team and build group community.

- a) Help the group develop a safe and loving environment through keeping confidences, everyone listening with no cross-talk, modeling transparency, not trying to 'fix' one another, etc.
- b) Ask everyone to share their personal testimony - perhaps one per meeting as you begin.
 - this allows us to know each other, the life stories and the conversion testimonies
 - work personally with those who are reluctant; gently challenge them and teach them how
 - send the group's ministry and outreach stories to the pastor for sharing in corporate worship
- c) Dedication to prayer practices will build up the group spiritually and relationally.
 - when people share personal struggles, ask someone to pray for them right then and there
 - as a leader, commit to praying regularly for your group members
 - encourage all to commit to pray for one another and for the neighbours you want to reach
- d) Utilize team building games, exercises, meals, and special fellowship times.
 - Christian: <http://christian-leadership.org/how-well-is-your-team-doing/>
<http://www.youthministry.com/team-building-initiatives>
 - secular: <http://www.teambuildingactivities.ca/a-round-up-of-team-building-ideas/>
http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm

2. TEMPLATE FOR SERMON-BASED BIBLE STUDY

*Note: This is a suggested format for a 2 hour meeting that will prevent important things from being missed or minimized. The time-line indicators below are intended as a tool to assist you as a leader, not to restrict you.

I. OPENING (10 Minutes)

A. Open in Prayer: (1-2 Minutes)

Lead out in a brief prayer asking God to open up His Word to hearts that He might grant understanding and shed light on what He is telling us and what He is asking us to do in response.

B. Read the Passage: (5-8 Minutes)

The leader may choose at times to read the passage themselves or delegate it to someone in the room. You may get each one to read taking turns. Maximum participation is to be encouraged but be sensitive to people who may have problems with reading.

II. STUDY (80 Minutes)

*Note: We have integrated the prayer into the application time as this will serve to ensure the focus and quality of our praying – life change.

A. Observation (20 Minutes)

1. As a group, discuss the people and events that make up the content or story-line (or the background where applicable) of the passage.

2. As a group, identify some of the key terms, phrases or statements that indicate truths emphasized by the author. Discuss why these elements are significant and how they relate to each other.

B. INTERPRETATION (15 Minutes)

1. Allow 2 minutes for each person to write a single sentence as simply as they can, stating what appears to them to be the central idea of the passage tying it all together.

2. Have each one quickly read what they have written and then seek to reach a consensus as a group on possible wording for the central idea coming out of the passage. (A flip chart or a white board can be used at this point to write out the wording as it developing it into an agreed upon statement.)

*Note: Leaders must be able to provide a solid understanding of the Bible passage. Use a reliable commentary so that what the group concludes in the study is consistent with a solid interpretation. The intent here is not to be controlling or argumentative but to ensure that people are not taking liberty with the actual text but seeking instead (together) to understand what the Bible text actually says and teaches.

C. APPLICATION / PRAYER (45 Minutes)

Application questions should be designed specifically based on each passage.

*Note: This should be an interactive sharing segment that will result in real growth in the Word applied to our personal lives, and over time, should also result in much deeper and more meaningful relationships (community) within the group.

*Note: It is recommended that as people share answers, personal needs and struggles to the application questions, someone next to them prays right after they share, rather than waiting and praying at the end.

*Note: Corporate prayer items from the other parts of the body.

III. **TEAM BUILDING** (30 Minutes)

This time can include some informal banter sometimes but it should also include some serious discussion/planning for outreach – mission talk. At times the CG Coach may provide suggested activities for this time as well. It may include missional prayer.

Further Notes:

Leaders should regularly encourage group members to be reading and re-reading the biblical material ahead (and behind) and stressing how important that is to accelerate and deepen the group learning time.

Our plan is to provide curriculum or study work sheets that will be made available to the leaders who can make them available as required for their group.

FBC TEACHING RESOURCES:

FBC will provide leaders with the Moody Bible Commentary - 1Volume. We want this to be used as the standard reliable commentary for FBC study, although you can utilize other resources as well. Comparison is helpful to study and reliability is crucial to accuracy.

Also recommended is or the Bible Knowledge Commentary -Walvrod, Zuck, 2vol.

<http://www.christianbook.com/bible-knowledge-commentary-new-testament> WW693800X

Other FBC recommended resources:

<http://sharethejourney.weebly.com/learning-links.html>

3. COMMUNITY GROUP PRAYER

1) Prayer is not an afterthought to be tacked on at the end of the meeting. **Enough time must be left for prayer** (at least 20 minutes, 30 would be better with a brief teaching time). Suggestions:

- Assign a timekeeper who warns you 5 minutes ahead of time that it is almost time for prayer so you can wrap up your lesson.
- Try praying prior to the lesson, see how it goes. Your group could begin with some Scripture-based praying, then pray about personal application issues that arise during the study, and then end with personal and missional prayers. Try various ways and see how your group feels about it.

2) You must make teaching on prayer a part of your group time. Pick a short piece of scripture on prayer and discuss it briefly before your prayer time. This is a great way to instill in the hearts of your people the importance of prayer in God's eyes. (Share this responsibility with others in your group after you have modeled it for them.). Discuss different postures of prayer, prayer focuses, struggles with prayer, testimonies of answered prayer, warfare etc; the goal is to help your community group to be people who pray-about everything.

3) Discuss up front with your group about why it is vital for you as their leader to help them become **comfortable with prayer**. Reinforce confidentiality, safe place, that no one is judging, we've all been scared. Deal openly with the fear aspect of prayer. Though we can't force someone to pray, there isn't a true follower of Christ, with the Holy Spirit's help, that can't break through that fear.

4) Because a lot of people don't know **what to pray for** or about except their own personal concerns; you can help them in several ways:

- Discuss briefly what things you might want to pray about- Praise; prayer on principles that you discussed that meeting, corporate needs and personal needs.
- For prayer needs (corporate or personal), ask your group how they might pray specifically for that need. Ideas from the group prior to prayer will help them when they need to pray as some just aren't sure what to pray for. Make this a part of your teaching on prayer every so often.
- Pick a prayer focus for the meeting (or get your group to pick a focus), Look to the group on how they can best pray for that focus, then ask them to include that focus in their prayer time in some way. Some people only pray for personal needs, this helps them to break free of that.

5) For now, you are **the prayer coordinator** of your group. It will take some time and prep but is necessary to grow your group into powerful, effective, confident pray-ers. As time reveals, pick a person who has a heart to pray and ask them to be prayer coordinator for your group. This gives them a role of leadership and responsibility. Depending on their maturity, their role could include:

- Overseeing the prayer time in your group, implementing creative ways to pray, leading brief discussions on prayer.
- Keeping a Prayer Journal for your group including needs and answered prayer. Email to the group reminders of prayer needs brought up at the meeting.
- Oversee a mini version of the 60 Second Prayer Alert for your group only. When a need arises that needs prayer but does not require to be put out to the whole church, the coordinator is the go-to person who will put it out to the group via email.
- Be a person that group members could call (besides the leader) to pray with them if needed.

Ideas you can implement to bring creativity into your prayer time and change it up:

- 1) Prayer Walk or Prayer Drive:** Depending on the size of your area and weather- you could walk or drive, and pray for your community, schools, homes of lost friends and family etc. This is powerful and personalizes your community. It would be great to do this at least once a year.
- 2) Use the Lord's Prayer:** Divide the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4) into sentences and take it in turns to expand on the meaning and pray it back to God.
- 3) Pray For Each Other:** As a need arises during the meeting, pray in the moment rather than waiting for your official prayer time.
 - If someone is ill or has deep needs have people sitting around that person, lay hands on that person as they are prayed for-ask a couple of them to pray for that person. Show scripture where the apostles (Acts 6:6 for ex) laid hands on people so people understand the foundation.
 - Have each person pray for the person on their right: Pray a blessing or Scripture over them.
 - Have people write their prayer needs or names of lost loved ones on index cards then have each person pick a card to pray for in that meeting and during the week to come.
 - Connect people as prayer partners, exchange emails or phone numbers. Have them check in with each other once a week to see how things are going and if there are any prayer needs. (Great way to help people connect and know each other better - challenge for men).
 - Spend more time praying than sharing. Stay away from sharing prayer requests and then praying them back to God as if he wasn't listening. Emphasize sharing briefly with the group.
- 4) Conversational Prayer:** Direct your group to pray 1-2 sentence prayers on a subject as they feel led; reinforce they can pray several times but to keep prayers short. When it is quiet, anyone can introduce a new subject. This is a great way to help people get used to praying out loud and in a group.
- 5) Use Scripture:** A vital aspect of prayer that we need to teach is using scripture in their personal and group prayer time. It will empower them to pray and enrich their prayer time like nothing else. Prayer and the Word go together; when we struggle to pray, praying God's Words back to Him is life-giving.
 - Personalize a psalm or one of Paul's prayers (Ephesians 1: Phil 1: Col 1); pray them for each other.
 - Use a portion of a psalm of praise to praise the Lord; expand on each line to make it personal. Show your group what this might look. (ie, Psalm 18, 21, 30, 32, 34, 40, 41, 66, 106, 116, 138).
- 6) Introduce Subjects not normally prayed for:** We must help our groups to pray for the things that are on God's heart, not just our stuff. It is so important for our groups to periodically pray for our persecuted brothers and sisters, our missionaries, unreached people groups, our governments and military etc. Pick a different subject each week and have someone pray about it or ask the group to pray about it as led.
 - Bring a picture of a missionary, a story of persecution, a report from a newspaper on an important government decision or a military loss; any tool to help your group pray outside of their personal needs. Discuss briefly how to best pray for these things.
- 7) Split into smaller groups** to pray together, especially if room allows and you have a large group. Split into partners and pray 1 on 1.
- 8) Pray for your church,** pastors, ministries and communities on an ongoing basis. If we are not meeting to pray corporately bi-weekly, it is vital we pray for these things.

4. MISSIOLOGY

BUILDING COMMUNITY

"May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." -Romans 15:5-7

We won't be very successful at reaching our communities unless we build community within our groups. We not only offer people the gospel, we are called to reflect the authentic loving community that we enjoy with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first priority for group leaders then is to seek ways to build community - to lead the group to practice functioning as a loving and serving team. Some groups will be quick to do this; other groups will need time and encouragement. Some people gel easily, some will take considerable time to develop deeper relationships, while others may eventually find they are in the wrong group. We cannot hurry building community, but we can foster its growth.

We are called to utilize the regular functions of community group life: teaching and discipling, praying for one another, caring for one another and connecting with one another. (see Guide pgs 6-10 + Appendix). Interestingly, we can also build community by discussing our mission - how we can reach our neighbours.

We should evaluate the kind of attitude and atmosphere our group presents: are we open and welcoming, or could our intimate group space be uncomfortable for new people? Consider the span of intimacy people tend to be comfortable with: public = 12 feet, social = 4-12 feet, personal = 18"-4 feet, intimate = less than 18". We may connect better with people first in community service participation at a neutral community place, and then invite them into our fellowship or hospitality space.

REACHING COMMUNITY

"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." -Matt.5:13-16
For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes..." -Romans 1:16

There is a basic strategy to understand how to reach our particular community: praying for the Lord's leading, an analysis of the people who live around us, following the mission patterns we find in Scripture and using the resources of our group and church. Prayerfully following this strategy and setting goals enables us to make a difference.

A. Analysis of the people and community: ('Community' -B. House, chap. 5-6-7 is especially helpful)

1. Who are the people in our community? What do they do? What do they value and believe? Are there demographic groups we can reach out to; what do they need from us?
 -use the Statistics Canada 2011 Census to find detailed demographic info about your community
<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>
2. What are the natural spaces in the community? Are there spaces to play, community centers to be involved with, fire departments, or other community places to help with? Find out what practical needs we can help meet. Consider ways to partner with local organizations that have common goals with us. Join where possible instead of creating new events.

3. What are the natural rhythms of our community? What distinctives do the seasons bring to people's lives? Are there festivals to celebrate or service opportunities to engage in?
 - >What opportunities exist in reaching the extended families and friends of your group members?
 - >What new rhythm could we bring to our communities: vbs or backyard Bible club, community meals, woodchucks, a community or individual help or cleanup day, meals for the sick, etc.
 - >Are we willing to make a commitment to serving together outside or the regular meeting time?

B. Analysis of what our group offers:

How we will reach out will vary from group and community. Some of you know your community or neighbourhood well. You know the people, what to join, what to do. Look at your group, your team - **your who** - in conjunction with **your what** - the people and opportunities that exist in the community.

Ask and have your group answer questions like these:

- ✓ Who are the people in your group that are key people in the community?
- ✓ Who is well connected, who always knows what is going on, knows who is related to whom?
- ✓ Who are the ones who might join a community association? Who might host a community bbq?
- ✓ Who will organize children's softball? Who has the best backyard for neighbourhood soccer?
- ✓ Who could start a program for seniors or children, or resurrect the community festival?
- ✓ Who loves hands-on work - what work projects could we do for single moms, widows, or seniors?
- ✓ Who might organize a neighbourhood vbs? Which members should plan it, promote it, host it, teach it, make crafts, run games? Maybe it needs to be 2 or more groups networking to pull it off.
- ✓ Who loves to visit others? Who could start an evangelistic study in a non-believers home?

C. Deciding what we as a group can do - short and long-term goals:

1. Use the Community Group Strategic Plan (pg.14) to help your group set goals.
2. Seek out the ideas of the group members and discuss as a group what you can do.
3. Identify specific people your group can reach and develop a prayer list.
4. Set some short-term goals, for people you can help and small projects you can do.
5. Consider some long-range goals, for outreach events you could do, perhaps with other community groups, working with your coaches.
6. Use the Community Group Replication Plan to help your group prepare for growth
7. Coaches should use the Area Plan to help plan ministry networking for groups in their area.

D. FBC Serving Opportunities for Community Groups: (speak with a pastor about ideas)

1. Debert Shannex service, 2nd Sunday, bi-monthly: singing, share testimony / message, visit people.
-or at a similar opportunity place in your community
2. Group participation in worship: serve the Lord's Table together, group testimony, prayer summits
3. Group participation in a special FBC event: set-up, doing a task, clean-up, etc.
4. Group participation on a church work day, property care, building cleaning etc.

5. PASTORAL CARE

Based on our FBC Life Model, people need to be cared for. We all need to feel loved, valued and that we belong. Most people know what it means to ‘care’. When we attach the word ‘pastoral’ to it, what does that do? The word comes from the biblical world of animal husbandry and the imagery of shepherding. To pastor is literally (Latin) to ‘shepherd’... think King David and even before that ... Abraham ... Isaac ... Jacob ... Moses ... The concept of shepherding is utilized by God in the development of **a biblical philosophy of leadership** which places top priority on the welfare of those being led.

Ezek 34:1-6

*1 The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds **take care** of the flock? 3 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. 4 You have not **strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured**. You have not **brought back the strays or searched for the lost**. You have **ruled them harshly and brutally**. 5 So **they were scattered** because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. 6 My sheep **wandered** over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.*

Mk 6:34

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

John 10:11 *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Mt 20:25-28

25 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27 and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Acts 20:25-31

*25 “Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26 Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27 For I have not hesitated to **proclaim to you the whole will of God**. 28 **Keep watch over** yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. 29 I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30 Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31 So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.*

1Pet 5:1-3

1 To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2 Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3 not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.

This is only a small sampling of the hundreds of passages that employ pastoral imagery to form the biblical body of teaching on Christian leadership. The concepts inherent within the pastoral care model are those of **watching over, guiding, protecting and providing for**.

When we speak of the ‘pastoral care’ of people then, we are talking about the leadership function of attending to the spiritual needs of another.

3 Main Tools For Pastoral Care: Personal Sacrifice / The Word of God / Prayer

The shepherding imagery is undoubtedly helpful (or else God would not have used it), however, as we study the NT letters to the churches, we see a different type of imagery surpassing it. Familial references dominate in the NT letters to the churches. Other types are used (*flock ... building ... bride... body...*) but family references outnumber all other types put together. The image of family doesn't negate the shepherding imagery but I believe it does transcend it. For example, sheep will never become shepherds, but children grow up to become parents and the concept of reproduction (multiplication) is key to our discipleship mission.

PASTORAL CARE IN THE TERMS OF 'SPIRITUAL PARENTING'.

1Thess 2:7b-12

Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, 8 so we cared for you. Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. 9 Surely you remember, brothers and sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. 10 You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11 For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12 encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.

The 'spiritual parenting' model of 'pastoral care' is particularly helpful when thinking through some of the 'how to' elements. The parallels are most instructive. And it is critical that we understand exactly what is involved because we want to be doing this really well. The stakes ... being and making reproducing disciples for Jesus.

1. Be an Example

The most important thing about being a good leader is being a good follower... 'reproducing disciples'... Don't expect people to do what you are not willing to do yourself... learn to lead yourself well (has been called 'self leadership') ... give yourself a good talking to regularly 😊 (see the 1Pet 5 reference above)

2. Be There

Availability ... it doesn't get more practical than this. This is basic, and yet it gets missed. ... requires transparency & vulnerability... being real... activities ... (1Thess 1:5 "... You know how we lived among you for your sake." See also 2Tim 3:10,11)

3. Pray With & For Them

The concept of prayer as care ... prayer needs to be understood in the context of relationship... How many times did Paul tell people he was praying for them? How many times did he ask people to pray for him?

4. Give Them The Word (1Thess 2:8,13)

Though we can rightfully talk about teaching, caring and mission engagement as three different things, we cannot ever separate them because they are inseparably linked and they overlap... guidance... protection...

5. Network

Help people get to know others within the body of Christ; one of the greatest resources we have. ('*koinonia*')

6. Keep Pointing Them To Jesus

You are not the answer to their needs. Neither am I. "*I freely confess I am not the Christ.*" John the Baptist

It's hard. It's supposed to be. How did Jesus care? By sacrificing. By giving of Himself. Pastoral care ('discipleship') is intensely personal by nature ... one on one ... 'labour intensive' for sure. It's not nearly as 'efficient' as getting a bunch of people together in a classroom and giving a 'lesson'. It's harder, messier and way more demanding but, while it may not be as 'efficient', it is far more 'effective' and is worth the 'expense'. The incarnation of Christ, along with His life of service, and ultimately His death, serves as the great example for us of what it means ultimately to really care as a Christian leader.

*For more resources on pastoral care and other leadership functions go to www.sharethejourney.ca/resources