



EST. **NORTHVIEW** 1980
COMMUNITY CHURCH

Community Group Leaders' Guide – Feb 15/16, 2025

This guide is designed to help you and your group be **deeply rooted followers of Jesus**.¹

You can take different approaches week to week - plan for your next meeting in advance.

IDEA #1 - BALANCE GATHER + GROW + GO.

The healthiest groups will give attention to all 3 discipleship categories: *Gather*, *Grow*, and *Go*.

You can't cover each of the 3 sections fully in 1 meeting. For balance, select one or two items from the Gather and Go sections in advance, and condense the Grow section (perhaps just do the sermon recap). You can also choose a different order (e.g., start in "grow", then hit "gather" + "go").

IDEA #2 - EMPHASIZE BIBLE STUDY.

Want a deeper "study" feel? Skip the "gather" section, and work through the "grow" section". Then, at minimum, take one thing from the "go" section: *prayer for the lost*.

IDEA #3 - EMPHASIZE SHARING LIFE.

Want a higher "relational" feel? Work your way through the "gather" section, and leave the "grow" section for this week. But try, at minimum, to take *prayer for the lost* from the "go" section.

You don't have to spend hours preparing like a scholar that "teaches".

You can spend your week a) walking with God to lead out of the overflow of that relationship, and b) taking 15 minutes familiarizing yourself with this guide to be a well-prepared shepherd that "cares" and "facilitates".

¹ If you don't know your group very well, we recommend starting with our "First Four" discussion guide before this one.

GATHER

Deeply rooted by sharing life seeking the presence of God.

This community based context can to heighten your awareness of God's presence in your time together, and give one another space to talk about what's really going on in life.

- "Let's start with prayer."
Thoughtfully acknowledge God's presence in the room. Commit your time to him. Start by calibrating everyone to this reality. Could be one person that opens your time in this way, or several.
- What is one thing you're really grateful for right now? Take turns and share one by one.
- Does anyone have a story of where you've seen God at work? Is there a life situation or answered prayer we can join you in celebrating? (This can be a way to revisit prayers or plans from a previous meeting.)
We'd love to share and celebrate stories from our Community Groups to honour God, encourage one another, and contribute to cultivating a culture of prayer across Northview! (With permission, share them with us!)
- What is one thing you're really burdened with right now? If comfortable, take turns and share one by one.
Idea: be specific. "Is there a practical need or decision you're facing that you'd like the group's help with?"
- What are you praying about right now? How can we join you thanking God or seeking God?
Idea: get one person to share, and then get one person to volunteer to pray for them. Repeat this process until everyone is covered.
- End with prayer, or move to the Grow and/or Go sections in the pages below.

GROW

Deeply rooted by being formed through the word of God.

This biblically based content overlaps with the current weekend teaching at your Northview campus and positions you, as a group, to be shaped by studying Scripture.

- **Pray.** Acknowledge God's presence + ask for his help to hear what he's saying through the text.
Idea: ask another person to do this. A sample prayer: "Father, thank you for this time we have. We acknowledge that you are here with us and we ask for your help to hear what you're saying through your word by your Spirit. We commit our time to you for your glory and our good. Amen."
- **Share a takeaway from the Feb 15/16 sermon.** "Is there something the Holy Spirit highlighted for you?"
For each person to share an insight they got or an action step they are taking from the sermon could use up your time. This might be a good use of your time, but if you want to go further into the study of the text below, indicate this upfront.

- **Facilitate a brief study of 1 Corinthians 7:17-40**

Start the conversation with an "Icebreaker."

In today's passage, Paul further explains to the Corinthians what it looks like for them "to not be their own". By looking at examples from society and ethnicity as well as marriage and singleness Paul casts a strong vision for discipleship.

Share from your life to get a feel for this dynamic in the text - while also helping others get to know one another - by using this **Icebreaker question: Was there ever a circumstance or environment (e.g relationship, job, health) in your life that was challenging for you so much so that you thought to yourself "if God does not change it, I don't know if I can make it as a Christian?"**. (Has your situation changed? How has this impacted/or is impacting your faith?)

Study Step 1: Read 1 Corinthians 7:17-40

Familiarize yourself with this section of verses.

Study Step 2: Understand Their Story – (With answer key + leaders notes)

Ask *observation questions* to understand what the author is communicating to the original audience.

- **Take a look at 7:17-24.**
 - Paul continues teaching on faithful living. Remember that the Corinthians thought their might be merit to "not have sexual relations with a woman" (7:1) What is the central opening idea in v.17?
 - **"Lead the life that God has assigned to you and to which God has called you" (7:17)**

- Paul delivers examples of how this command plays out in the church. The first example is circumcision. Which observations do you make? (v.18-20)
 - **If already circumcised when having become a Christian, one should not try to remove any marks. If not circumcised when having become a Christian, one should not seek it out (7:18)**
 - **Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything (7:19a)**
 - **Keeping God's commandments counts for something (7:19b)**
 - **Each one should remain in the condition they have been called (7:20)**
- The next example is slavery. What wisdom does Paul provide?
 - **One should not be concerned to be a Christian slave (7:21)**
 - **If possible to gain freedom, take the opportunity (7:21)**
 - **The one who is a slave, is free in Christ, the free person is a slave to Christ (7:22)**
 - **Christ bought us with a price, Christians should not sell themselves into slavery²**
 - **Let those in whatever condition they've been called remain with God. (7:23)**
- **Take a look at 17:25-40.**
 - Paul explores the argument by looking at wisdom for single adults. Gather some observations.
 - 7:25-7:29
 - **Paul's judgment in the current Corinthian situation is trustworthy (7:25)**
 - **Being pledged to a woman one should remain (7:26)**
 - **If without a woman to be pledged to one should remain and not seek it out (7:27)**
 - **Marriage in either case is not sinful (7:28a)**
 - **Marriage brings with it worldly troubles, which Paul wants to shield them from (7:28b)**
 - 7:29-31 What statements is Paul making about living in our "time"
 - **The appointed time is short (7:29)**
 - **Let the ones with wives live as if they had none (7:29)**
 - **Those who mourn and rejoice as if they do not mourn or rejoice (7:30)**
 - **Those who buy as if they had nothing to buy with (7:30b)**
 - **Those who deal ("use things of the world" NIV) as if they couldn't (7:31a)**
 - **The present form of the world is passing away (7:31b)**
 - 7:32-7:34 Find the contrasts between unmarried and married
 - **The unmarried man or woman is anxious for the things of God (7:32, 7:34b)**
 - **The married man or woman is anxious for worldly things, how to please the spouse (7:33, 7:34a)**
 - 7:35 What is Paul's aim for all of these "recommendations" ?
 - **Paul has their benefit in mind and wants them in whatever situation to have undivided devotion to the Lord (7:35)**
 - 7:36-7:40 Some final judgments
 - **If there is lack of self control, marriage is the better (not sinful) (7:36, 7:38)**
 - **If there is self control, and conviction not to marry the other it is also good³ (7:37, 7:38)**
 - **After death, the widow is free to remarry whomever (if believer) she wishes (7:39)**

² "Having told the Corinthians' Christian slaves to take their freedom if they can (v. 21b), it seems redundant to tell those who are free not to sell themselves into slavery. According to Winter, Paul has in mind "Christian free men willing to sell themselves into slavery for social and financial benefit." - PNTC 1 Corinthians Commentary

³In v. 37 he affirms that not all those who are betrothed must get married. Remaining single is still an acceptable option. Both the man who marries and the one who does not may do *the right thing*. The action is not the sole determinant of "pleasing the Lord" (7:32).

- **Paul would argue that it is better for her to stay unmarried (7:40)**
- *Reflection question. This passage is quite extensive and complex. To avoid getting lost in the details, let's reflect on verses 17 and 35. What is Paul's primary concern in these verses? How does this focus shape the broader conversation?*
- Take these observations into the next step below.

Study Step 3: Connect To God's Story – (With answer key + leaders notes)

Ask questions to understand how this text fits in the larger gospel story.

We've selected a few connections that are here to a) expand on the content of the passage and/or b) clarify the content of the passage.

- Paul encourages Christians to be fully devoted and live in the life they have been called to. In light of the larger teaching he argued that Christians are not their own but belong to God (6:10, 7:22). Twice he calls them to consider their standing in the Lord before thinking about identity ("You have been bought with a price" (6:20, 7:23). Look up **Romans 5:1-10** and consider what the gospel accomplished.
 - What did the price purchase?
 - **Believers are declared righteous through faith in Jesus Christ (5:1).**
 - **believers have peace with God (5:1).**
 - **Believers are established in God's grace (5:2).**
 - **Believers confidently look forward to the future glory that comes from God (5:2).**
 - **Believers are able to find joy even in hardships because suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope (5:3-4).**
 - **The hope believers have in God is secure and will not disappoint (5:5).**
 - **God's love has Believers experience God's love through the Holy Spirit (5:5).**
 - **Believers are spared from God's judgment due to the work of Christ (5:9).**
 - **Believers are restored to a right relationship with God through Christ's death (5:10).**
 - **Believers' salvation is also assured through Christ's resurrection life (5:10).**
 - *Reflection: Why would reminding ourselves of the gospel inform our marital, social ethnic status?*
- In 1 Corinthians 7:19 Paul argues that circumcision or uncircumcision does not influence our identity. In 7:21 Paul applies the same thinking to slavery ("don't be concerned"). From a Jewish perspective this is quite revolutionary. (For a Jew to be uncircumcised or sold out as a slave to Roman pagans, was considered sinful) Look up the following passages:
 - **Skim Galatians 3:1-12.** What good are works of the law (like getting circumcised, or avoiding Roman enslavement?) In other words, what makes a "true" Jew? (Child of Abraham by circumcision or not?) What is Paul's main point?
 - **Those of faith are Abraham's true sons. (3:7)**
 - **Righteousness does not come from law but faith (3:11)**
 - **Now look at Galatians 3:13-14.** What has Christ accomplished?
 - **Christ redeemed us from the law by dying on the cross (3:13)**
 - **In Jesus we receive the promise of Abraham, and become true children of God through faith**
 - **Now look at Galatians 3:26-29.** How does faith in Jesus affect our ethnic or social status?
 - **We all become sons and daughters of God through Jesus and faith in him (3:26)**
 - **There is no more difference between Jew/Gentile, slave or free, woman or man**

- *Reflection: Paul illustrates that a change of identity is good news! Because we're children of God our circumstances are incidental. How does this speak to you? Does this challenge any longings you currently experience?*
- Sometimes our personal circumstances (whether to get married or not) are less a "right or wrong" kind of decision but more so a good vs better. In any case Paul wants us to pursue undivided devotion. Close by reading how this played out in his own life.
 - Read **Philippians 3:7-14 and Philippians 4:10-13** How did Paul live out what he preached?
 - **Paul counts everything as a loss except knowing Jesus. (3:7-8)**
 - **Full commitment means forgetting past accomplishments and focusing on the goal of glorifying Christ (3:13-14)**
 - **Contentment comes not from external circumstances but from an inner attitude of trust in God. (4:11)**
 - **Paul demonstrates that true contentment is found in both prosperity and hardship and gained with Jesus' help (4:12-13)**

Step 4: Apply To Our Story

Ask questions to discern what God is telling us to do with the help of the Holy Spirit.

- Are there circumstances in your life that hinder you from being fully devoted to Jesus and living the life he called you to? If you feel comfortable, share with your group if this is something you experience.
- *What counsel would you give someone who wants to grow in the area of "contentment?"*
 - *How can we grow in contentment? (Think scenarios like singleness through: How can the church be an encouragement? What potential does a season of singleness with full devotion have?)*
- How should we pray in light of today's discussion?
 - Take some time to pray for the singles and for those who are lonely in the church. Perhaps God is putting someone in your heart whom you want to encourage!
 - Thank God for good examples of men and women who live fully devoted to the Lord even in challenging circumstances.
 - Share if there is anything that this chapter stirred up in you, perhaps you know someone who is frustrated in his circumstances. How can you be there for this person?

BONUS RESOURCES (a curated list from our team to dive deeper into the topics from these past weeks)

Tim & Kathy Keller - *The Meaning of Marriage*

Jim Newheiser - *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*

Gary Thomas - *Sacred Marriage*

Christopher Ash - *Married for God*

Denny Burk - *What is the Meaning of Sex*

Paul Tripp - *Marriage: 6 Gospel Commitments Every Couple Needs to Make*

Sam Allberry - *7 Myths About Singleness*

GO

Deeply rooted by participating in the mission of God.

These culturally relevant applications are meant, with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, to prompt actions that bring the life of God's kingdom into us and out to others.

- Pray for those far from God that you personally know, by name.
Leaders note: This is something that we're putting deliberately at the top here. Every time. ("5x5x5 cards" are available at each campus on the weekend, and our "Loving The Lost" group prayer guide is attached to our weekly group leader email.)
- Is there something that seems especially relevant for us to do personally based on our discussion?
Leaders note: This is something that may overlap with the "Apply To Our Story" step in the "GROW" section above, but here it is meant to help narrow down a specific thing that people actually plan to commit to doing.
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do together based on our discussion?
Leaders note: Depending on the applications you've discussed in the "GROW" section, there could be opportunities to serve others as a group. Or, perhaps to gather for worship, prayer, and/or equipping together.
- Is there something we as a group should plan to do to spend time with someone who doesn't yet follow Jesus? Or to make/strengthen connections with our neighbours?

Note from Our Outreach Coordinator:

Hey Northview Community Groups! If you don't know me, I'm Connor, and I work at Northview as the Local Outreach Coordinator. One of our Local Partners, Cyrus Center, has an upcoming event and fundraiser, "Coldest Night of the Year." On February 22nd, at 4 pm, people of all ages will walk together to support and raise awareness for Cyrus Center and youth that experience homelessness. This is a great way to support an amazing local organization doing profound work in Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Sign up as a group and walk together!"

Link: <https://cnoy.org/location/abbotsford>