

Home Group Strategy

March 2010



“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up...”
1 Thessalonians 5:11

Purpose: The purpose of our Home Group Ministry is to:

- a) facilitate spiritual growth as measured through the environments.
- b) develop community and life-on-life spiritual encouragement.
- c) live on mission together through the group.
- d) growth in groups through the process of multiplication.
- e) develop leaders.



Organization & Strategy:

1. Create a network of groups that meet weekly for Bible study, fellowship, and prayer.
2. Group size will be at least eight, but no more than 12-15 people. Twelve is the ideal number.
3. Groups will meet year-round, breaking no more than two weeks at any time.
4. The Group Leader will enter a covenant relationship with the church to intentionally and diligently shepherd the group toward its goals and abide by Westwood’s Home Group Strategy.
5. Each group will have a leader or coordinator, and each mixed group will have either a married couple or a male and a female leader.
6. Group Leaders will enlist an apprentice and other leaders who will be given responsibility to coordinate and lead various aspects of the group.
7. Groups will meet for 18-24 months, then strategically multiply.
8. All of Westwood’s groups will at times participate in coordinated church-wide studies. (A curriculum map is currently under development and may later become standardized.)
9. Group members will sign Westwood’s Group Covenant within eight weeks of beginning. As groups are limited in size, group members are encouraged to opt in or out and not be half-hearted in commitment.
10. Groups will be assigned a coach who will be a mentor and helper to the group leaders of 4-6 groups. He/she may also coordinate the work of missionally partnered groups.
11. Groups nearing or passing 15 in attendance will begin the multiplication process.
12. Small groups (ABS, Home Groups) will be the point of relationship with the church. The church will serve and minister together through its groups.
13. Each meeting’s attendance will be reported by the group.
14. Group leaders experiencing challenges are expected to discuss issues with their coach, Campus Pastor and/or the Small Groups Pastor.

Home Group Strategy

September, 2007

1. **Connection Point** - Westwood's Small Group Strategy calls for every member and attender to be a part of a small group as a connection point to the church. This small group will either be a Sunday-morning ABS Class or a Home Group. As Home Groups are a more fertile environment for spiritual growth and supportive relationships, we consider Home Groups to be the ultimate destination for your small group involvement. Those who are involved in an ABS Class are encouraged to form smaller groups within their class for continued discipleship and fellowship. These are called E-Groups.
2. **High Commitment** - Home Groups are a high commitment group. The dynamic of this type of small group makes faithful participation a requirement for the success of the group. That's why we begin with a 6-8 week test drive before participants are asked to sign a group covenant.
3. **Spiritual Growth** - The purpose of Home Groups is to facilitate maximum spiritual growth through relationships with growing believers.
4. **Outcomes** - The church desires to involve every member and attender at Westwood in a small group in which every group member...
 - knows every other member more than just by name (life on life)
 - grows together in their walk with Christ
 - studies the Bible together weekly, and
 - feels the freedom to ask questions and share prayer requests
 - prays specifically for others in the group
 - supports each other in time of need
 - ministers with the group in the community
 - works together to reach people and to multiply the group
5. **Closed Groups** - Our groups are closed to new participants during most of the life-cycle of the group. This allows for trust and accountability to be developed among members of the group. There are some special circumstances in which new participants may be added.
6. **Meetings** - Weekly meetings typically last about two hours and include Bible study, fellowship and prayer. Most groups have light snacks and some do meals together and share in the responsibility.
7. **Multiplication** - Our groups meet together for 18-24 months, then strategically multiply. This allows a number of advantages:
 - a. It allows a time of reaching out to new people in our community and the church to involve them in groups.
 - b. We can continually expand the number of our groups.
 - c. New relationships are formed within the church.
 - d. Long-term groups don't get too predictable or stale.
 - e. People are stretched out of their comfort zone in a good way.
8. **Child Care** is provided in two ways:
 - a. at church on Sunday nights

b. by partial reimbursement of your individual in-home child care (visit WestwoodGroups.com for complete info)

9. **Group Size** - The optimal size of groups is twelve and the absolute maximum is fifteen.
10. **Leadership** - Each group will have a leader or coordinator, and each gender-mixed group will have either a married couple or a male and a female leader. New Coordinators will come from existing Home Groups. All Home Group Coordinators will complete an application and interview process with the church.
11. **Stages of the Group** - The lifespan of the group will include four stages:
 - a. Connection Meeting
 - b. Orientation/Test Drive Stage (6 weeks)
 - c. Growth Stage (15-21 months)
 - d. Multiplication Stage (6 weeks)
12. **Curriculum** - Common studies for all groups include those listed below. At other times, the group may chose topics of study with the goal balanced study between each of Westwood's environments: Connect with God, Grow with Believers, Serve in the Church, and Live on Mission.
 - a. Six week orientation study
 - b. Six week multiplication study
 - c. Two church-wide studies each year (August & January)
13. **Year-round** - Groups will meet year-round, breaking no more than two weeks at any time. Often groups decide to take a break during holiday weekends or if less than three couples (or five total individuals) are available to meet in a given week. Child care at church is sometimes not provided on holiday weekends.
14. **Group Covenant** - Group members will sign a covenant at the end of the Orientation Stage with the following components:

▪ Priority of attendance	▪ Authenticity & Honesty	▪ Commitment to Prayer
▪ Participation	▪ Confidentiality	▪ Accountability
▪ Encouragement	▪ Conflict resolution	▪ Biblical basis
15. **Point of Relationship** - Home Groups are a point of relationship with the church for ministry, communication, accountability, service, community involvement, etc.
16. **Participation** - All group members will be given opportunities to participate according to their spiritual gifts.