

WHY CONNECT GROUPS EXIST

Connect Groups have one, simple purpose—to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of Relationships. Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Connect Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you. We are connecting people to God and connecting people to each other.

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12 NLT

MOUNTAINVIEW CHURCH CONNECT GROUPS MODEL

At Mountainview Church we believe our church must be Small enough to care for every individual and Large enough to impact our world.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus. We gather in Connect Groups to build community and care for people. We believe in changing our world one life at a time.

Mountainview Church is a church of Connect Groups, not a church with Connect Groups.

We base our Connect Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

ACTS 5:42 NIV

**CONNECT GROUPS
OFFER PEOPLE:**

1. A Place to Connect

Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.

1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Connect Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A Place to Protect

We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.

1 JOHN 3:16 NLT

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Connect Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

3. A Place to Grow

As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.

PROVERBS 27:17 NLT

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Connect Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

WHAT A CONNECT GROUP LOOKS LIKE

YOUR LIFE IS YOUR GROUP

At Mountainview, we use a Common Interest approach to Connect Groups. This means we want people to gather together based on the things they enjoy and are important to them. Essentially, the things you are already doing in your life are the things that can make up your Connect Group!

Connect Group leaders form their group around their Gifts or Interest

From sports groups to lunch groups, mom groups to student groups, Bible study groups to creative arts groups, our groups are as varied as we are. All groups fall within one of eight Anchors

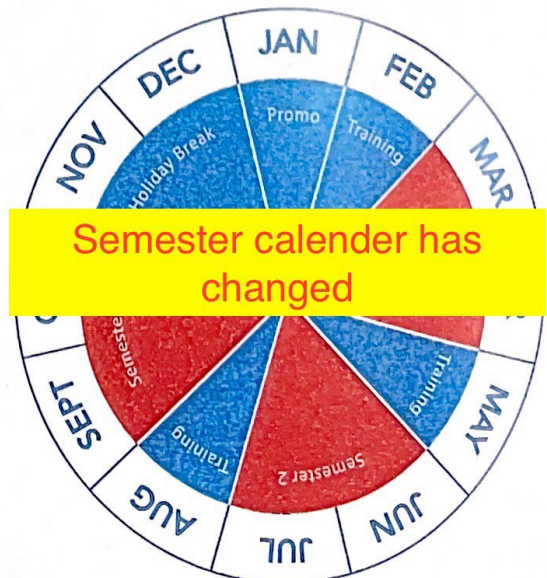
- Men
- Women
- Students
- Marriage & Family
- Freedom
- Prayer
- Outreach
- Finances

Groups meet throughout the year in three semesters.

Groups meet Weekly during each semester.

Groups meet in a variety of places like homes, parks, restaurants, coffee shops and office buildings.

New groups start every semester making it easy to build community and enjoy different types of groups.



No matter what your group meets about, each meeting should be made up of four things:

We call this ESPN

E

1. Encouragement

Laid back time for group members to have casual fellowship, talk and get to know each other.

S

2. Scripture

This will vary based on what kind of group you're leading. It could be sharing an encouraging bible verse or even have a discussion about a Sunday message or current series.

P

3. Prayer

Ask for prayer requests from group members and pray at the beginning and/or the end of each group meeting.

N

4. Next Steps

Whether it's through activities or discussion, always find a way to include a spiritual component and the Word of God. This can be as simple as sharing something God is teaching you with the group or talking about a verse you read that week. We desire to help each individual or couple find their Next Step.

Connect Groups are not a place for:

Business

Offerings

Unapproved materials or speakers

Controversial topics

YOUR ROLE AS CONNECT GROUP LEADER

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Connect Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of Mountainview Church to help care for people.

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Connect Group Leader is to help group members Move one step closer in their walk with God.

Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;

PROVERBS 27:23 NLT

People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different next steps to take. Here is a guide of some Next Steps you can help people take:

1. Start attending Sunday services
2. Start reading the Bible regularly
3. Start praying regularly
4. Be water baptized
5. Listen to past sermons online
6. Join a Service Team
7. Freedom Resources
8. Attend a men's, woman's or youth event
9. Invite a friend or a neighbor to church or a Connect Group
10. Attend a Connect Group Leadership Training class to become a Connect Group Leader

MOUNTAINVIEW CHURCH

How to be a successful Connect Group Leader:

1. Pray daily for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a Co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.
3. Connect with group members between weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
4. Have Fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
5. Respect people's Time by beginning and ending your group on time.
6. Invite group members to attend church services and events with you like NOW Night, conferences, or outreach opportunities.
7. Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

Preparing for your group meetings

- Send a message to group members reminding them about the first meeting.
- Arrive early to set up a welcoming environment.
- Consider having name tags available to help everyone learn names for the first few weeks.

Conversation

Here are a couple conversation starters to help get people talking as your group gets to know each other:

- How did you learn about our group?
- What are your hobbies?
- What are you looking forward to this year?
- What brought you here?
- What are you hoping to get out of this Connect Group?

CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a **Foundation** of our church, and it is important for your Connect Group.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2 CHRONICLES 7:14 NLT

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

Group texting and asking for prayer requests works well! This can open up the people in your group to begin caring and praying for each other.

CONFIDENCE AS A CONNECT GROUP LEADER

If you only do what you feel comfortable doing, you don't need God. God's best is often found outside your comfort zone.

When you serve God and people by leading a Connect Group, He will equip you and give you the strength and wisdom to lead well.

For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.

PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NLT

For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.

2 TIMOTHY 1:7 NLT

MOUNTAINVIEW CHURCH

When you feel uncertain about leading a group, use Scripture to overcome the lies of the enemy:

1. When you feel like you don't have the time, remember God has Created you for this, and His timing is perfect.

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

ECCLESIASTES 11:4 TLB

2. When you feel unqualified, remember God has Equipped you.

It is not that we think we are qualified to do anything on our own. Our qualification comes from God. He has enabled us to be ministers of his new covenant.

2 CORINTHIANS 3:5-6 NLT

3. When you feel like your past disqualifies you, remember God uses Imperfect people.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4 NLT

LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

As a Connect Group Leader, you are never alone in creating community. We are all working alongside you to invest in great Connect Groups at Mountainview.

YOUR COACH

As a Connect Group Leader, you have a Coach paired with you to help as you need support throughout the semester.

Your Coach's number one priority is to pray for you daily. Reach out to your Coach if you have a need, prayer request, or concern.

When you feel like you don't know how to help someone in your group, remember ESPN:

E: Encourage
S: Share Scripture
P: Pray
N: Next Steps

HOW TO CREATE GOOD GROUP DYNAMICS

Set Expectations

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

Follow the 70 - 30 Rule

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

Keep Discussion

If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.

Keep the conversation relevant to everyone

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

Respect boundaries

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Connect Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable or inappropriate situation.

STAY CONNECTED

Throughout the semester, respond to your Coach and the Connect Groups team about group attendance, potential new Connect Group Leaders, and how members are moving one step closer.

PREPARING TO LEAD

All Connect Group Leaders complete the following steps before leading:

- Submit an idea
- Attend a Connect Group Leadership Training
Complete the Connect Group Leadership Application
- Complete a Connect Group Leadership one-on-one interview
- Agree with the Connect Group Leadership Commitment and Honor Code

1. Ask God for direction about what group to lead and who to invite.
2. Once you decide on a topic or activity for your group, choose a place and time to meet.
3. Invite people you know or meet to come check out your group.
4. Pray for God to do great things through your Connect Group

Thank you for being an important part of Connect Groups at Mountainview Church!

HOW TO START YOUR CONNECT GROUP