**COVENANT CHURCH of TECUMSEH**

**SMALL GROUP MINISTRY FAQ’s**

**What is the Vision Statement of SGM?** Small Group Ministry (SGM) is intended to enable God’s people to spiritually grow and mature in the Word of God by using the unique qualities and strengths that are found in smaller groups. The ultimate goal is to form cohesive bonds between current believers while opening up opportunities for those outside our radius to come to know Christ, His followers, and His plan for us in a more intimate way thus increasing God’s Kingdom.

**Why small groups?** The small groups, about 5-12 people each, lend themselves to more interaction between those attending thus promoting more sharing of ideas and life experiences. If the groups become too large, the intimate environment tends to diminish over time thus defeating the purpose of the small group. Small groups are also a less intimidating place to bring new people who are not accustomed to learning God’s Word or sharing amongst others. They promote an atmosphere of safety and confidentiality, which is important when building and maintaining trust.

**Where do the groups meet?** An ideal environment for the small groups is in the comfort of a congregant’s home where a hospitable and congenial atmosphere is present. Oftentimes, the materials used are video driven, so a home with a relatively large living space, viewing screen and DVD player would be helpful. Keep in mind that the host/hostess does not necessarily have to be the small group facilitator. If a home is not available for a particular night, then the church itself could be considered as a location. **SPECIAL NOTE:** some participants may have allergies or sensitivities to pets and/or scents such as candles and perfumes. It is good to be aware of those when opening a home to others. Freely roaming pets can be a distraction to some people who have a hard time focusing, so it is good to be aware of the needs of others by offering to keep the pets separated from the group.

**Who facilitates these groups?** In order to maintain the integrity of the groups, it is wise to have Covenant Church congregants facilitate the groups that have proven themselves over time to be spiritually sound and known to have used good judgment in challenging situations. The fruits of the Spirit should be evident in their lives. If a current facilitator is ready to take a break from that position in their group, they can communicate the need for a new facilitator to the SGM Director who will then seek out a replacement for that position.

**Who attends these groups?** The base of the groups is comprised of Covenant Church adult congregants. The intent of Covenant Church is to reach out to those in need, so it would be the goal of each group to invite individuals that they come across within our community that they feel are open to, and will benefit from, the ministry of the team. It is important to note that if a member of an existing group would like to invite someone new into the group, it should first be run by the group before the invitation is extended. It is possible that it may not be the right time to add a new person depending on the materials being studied or due to confidentiality issues. Wisdom is the key to this process. If someone approaches us with interest in joining SGM, we are open to anyone who is in search of Jesus Christ in their lives and we will do our best to meet their needs. [37] On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. [38] Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.” –John 7:37-38

**How were the individual groups determined?** Initially, the groups were set up based on the day and time each person was available to meet. This information was gathered via a SGM survey, which was distributed to all Covenant Church members and friends. Now that the groups have been established and we’ve completed our unified studies, the individual groups have organically ebbed and flowed depending on the subject matter chosen by each group. **MORE >>>**

**How often do they meet?** This will vary from group to group witheach individual group determining the frequency of their meetings (i.e. once a week, every 2 weeks, or once a month).

**How long does each meeting last?** Each meeting can run anywhere from an hour and a half to two hours depending on the material and the group dynamic. It is important for the facilitator to be respectful of the time constraints of the individual group members.

**What time does each session begin?** The start times for the evening sessions range between 6:00pm and 7:00pm, whatever time the group agrees upon. Morning and/or afternoon sessions may become available at a later date depending on interest.

**Will the groups always contain the same people?** Not necessarily. If the day or time is no longer working for an individual or the dynamic of the group is not conducive to their growth, they are welcome to leave that group and investigate another. If the dynamic of a group is healthy and showing growth and wants to maintain those attending, it does not have to split up but hopefully will be open to new participants if there is interest.

**What about subject matter?** If a group has completed a study and is interested in beginning a new one, they can talk amongst the group about what they’d like the next step to be. One of the goals of SGM is to reach out to those in need in our community. Choosing a topic that would be pertinent to those people would be something to consider or perhaps coming up with some sort of local outreach project. A SGM resource library is located in Covenant Church Chapel with DVD-driven studies available as well as books to choose from. You are welcome to sign these resources out by filling out the provided sign-out log. If you have other ideas or suggestions, you may contact the SGM Director.

**When do the sessions begin?** Watch for postings. It will depend on whether we are doing a unified study or if the groups are doing individual studies.

**THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION**

**Why participate?** God has given you a unique personality, life story, and knowledge base. This is something that can be shared to help others who may have had, or do have, similar challenges and/or life experiences. And conversely, you might be touched by the life story of someone else. By digging into Biblical topics and learning about the characters of the Bible, we learn more about the mind and heart of God. This is information that can deepen your faith, strengthen your armor, and inspire you in your Christian growth. Small groups will not always be about deep spiritual topics. There will be times in which you just share stories, laughter, and true fellowship. All of these things in conjunction with each other will bring you a sense of connectedness and family. By binding His people closer together, God creates a unified front to share in the daily challenges and joys that we face while equipping us to reach out to those in need of learning about Jesus Christ thus fulfilling our great commission of making new disciples.

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