

## Simple Guide to Forming a Group Covenant

A **covenant** is a *formalized set of conversations about the purpose of your group and expectations of your group members.*

Covenants can take many forms, written or discussed, emailed or printed, signed or verbally agreed upon, etc. Use your discretion as a leader to decide what is best for your group. Use these guidelines to help you think through what conversations you'd like to have.

A few key conversations to discuss:

- **Commitment:** length of the group (5 weeks, a semester, full year), how often you'll meet, start and end time, etc.
- **Confidentiality:** what is said in the group stays in the group (exception: if someone talks about self harm or harming someone else)
- **Respect:** each person is unique and made in the image of God - so talk about conduct within the group, listening & speaking, etc.
- **Children:** how will you handle childcare as a group?
- **Purpose:** what is your primary purpose?

You can use Woodlands' Purpose and Priorities to help shape what your purpose as a group will be - ultimately, we want to be communities of people helping each other faithfully follow Jesus. Practically, what might that look like? (Staying grounded in the Word & prayer? How will you help each other do that in your group? Or being grace-filled? What does that look like in your group?

***Talking about expectations and purpose on the front end of the group will set you up for a great year. With an established base you can navigate the inevitable questions and situations that arise throughout the life of your group. This promotes a greater common understanding and common ground to work out any situations and issues that could come up.***

**Remember:** our groups are gathering under the banner of Christ and we are seeking to pray, learn, encourage and support one another in our relationship with God, each other, and God's purposes for our lives and our church in our small groups. Use this covenant conversation to guide your group into seeking to grow in spiritual maturity through meaningful Christian relationships and the study of God's Word.

If your group has been meeting for awhile, this is the perfect time to have a conversation and refresher about your goals and plans.

## WOODLANDS CHURCH: PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES

7/1/2020

### **PURPOSE:**

*To be a Christ centered community, helping people faithfully follow Jesus both locally and globally.*

### **PRIORITIES:**

**Grounded:** We aspire to be a Christ centered community grounded in the Bible and prayer. The Bible is God's Word, our ultimate authority, and we seek to study it, understand it, and be transformed by it. Therefore it will be the basis of our teaching, shape our ministries, guide our decisions, and govern our conduct. Prayer is powerful and essential in the pursuit of God and His purposes. Therefore we will engage in widespread and consistent prayer at all levels of church life.

**Grace-Filled:** We aspire to be a community marked by grace. Grace is the foundation of our faith, and the essence of Biblical love. All people are made in the image of God, infinitely valuable to Him, and yet in need of His grace. Therefore we will love all people and will continually proclaim the grace-filled love that has come to the world in Jesus Christ. God is honored and people thrive when Biblical love is practiced, so we will express our differences with graciousness and pursue our mission with unity.

**Going:** We aspire to be a church that goes intentionally into our local community and world with the Gospel. Jesus is the hope of the world, so we will strategically and creatively share the good news and love of Christ in relevant ways. We will seek to bless and impact others by doing good works to meet pressing needs.

**Growing:** We aspire to be a community where everyone is growing in their knowledge of, trust in, dependence on, and obedience to Jesus. He is Lord, and calls us to live surrendered to Him, so we will help people pursue spiritual growth in all of life, for all of life. To facilitate spiritual growth in our community we will coach people to walk with Jesus, equip them for service and witness, and develop leaders.

**Gathering:** We aspire to pursue life in Christ together; therefore we commit to gather consistently in two ways. Every Sunday morning, we gather for corporate worship, prayer, and the teaching of God's Word. We also meet together in smaller groups as transformational communities to support, challenge, and encourage one another to be Christ-centered. In our times together the Holy Spirit shapes us to be like Jesus and sends us to be Jesus in our community and the world.

**Giving:** We aspire to practice faithful generosity in all areas of our lives, believing that the extent of our fruitfulness will be determined by our faithfulness with what He has entrusted to us. Jesus gave his life for us so we will give our time, talents, and treasures for his purposes. As stewards of everything and owners of nothing, we will seek to manage the resources entrusted to us with integrity and use the abilities he has equipped us with to serve faithfully.