

# The Gathering Community Group Guide

## Discover The Gathering // Bad blind date prevention

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September 1, 2013

Ephesians 2:13 and various

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS WILL BEGIN AGAIN THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 15<sup>th</sup>. SIGN UPS ARE HAPPENING EACH SUNDAY AT THE CONNECTION DESK.**

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## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

Our goal in Discover The Gathering is to help you get a better picture of who we are as a church, what we're called to do as a church and why we do what we do the way we do it! Of course, it's all about the vision that God gave us based on Ephesians 2:13, and our vision is simply to LIVE NEAR GOD IN ORDER TO BE SENT TO THOSE FAR FROM HIM. We do this by being near God first, then near man, and then making disciplers who will repeat that cycle. "Near" is the keyword, and that means we've got to be:

1. **Necessary:** In today's culture, we make optional the things that God says are necessary. Three that we teach about regularly are the work of Jesus on the cross, the fellowship of the body and the power of the Holy Spirit. Teaching these as necessary will allow our church to be necessary to the city around us as well.
2. **Equipping:** If we're going to be sent by God to people far from him, then our church must be one that equips you to actually go and tell others about Jesus and to minister effectively to the hurting. That means that we will teach the Bible relentlessly because it is the primary tool for equipping us according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17. It also means that each member of the church is stepping into service on a ministry team so we can serve Jesus and the church with excellence.
3. **Authentic:** This happens in community and is why we will always encourage our members to be active in Community Groups. Living life together sharpens us, soothes us and makes us better.
4. **Relational:** Can you grow apart from the church? Sure, but not as much as you think you can. Something happens when we really put our roots down in one place and allow the nutrients in that soil to penetrate our lives. In Ephesians 3, Paul told the church (v. 10) that God would do more than they could imagine (v. 21) when they were PLANTED (v. 17).

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful or troubling insight or principle from this week's message, if any?
- What happens in our lives when we make optional what God makes necessary?
- When explaining about why we have elders at The Gathering, Paul made this statement: "Everyone has a voice, but not everyone has a vote." Why do you think that is so important when it comes to deciding spiritual matters? (you may find 1 Corinthians 2:14 and Matthew 11:15 helpful)
- Paul shared that he is an introvert and that community can be a little overwhelming because of that. How do you respond to the idea of living life together with a smaller group of believers?
- Ultimately, we want you to be planted as a member of The Gathering. Take time to read through the attached Member Covenant and pray. If you feel this is the place where you can push your roots down and grow, simply bring a signed copy with you to the Connection Desk on Sunday!



## OUR MEMBER COVENANT

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,  
may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how  
wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.*

*Ephesians 3:17-18*

Being a member at The Gathering is more family than formal, and yet we understand the power that lies in walking this journey together with others. The Bible recognizes this truth in Amos 3:3 when it asks a simple question:

*“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?”*

The obvious answer is no, not because we didn't sign a long list of things that we have to do or believe, but because it's just really hard to accomplish things when everyone is going in different directions. Not only that, it hurts!

So being a part of the membership at The Gathering really boils down to agreeing with our mission: living near God (through worship and personal spiritual growth), living near man (through fellowship and community), and making disciplers (through service, outreach and intentional relationships).

**Our commitment to you** as a member is that we will love you deeply, equip you fully, protect you fiercely, and walk with you honestly. We take seriously our responsibility to help you discover what you were made for (Ephesians 2:10), to equip you for a steady life of service to God and man (Ephesians 4:11-13), and to help you prepare for the day when you will present yourself to Jesus (Revelation 19:6-8).

**Our expectations of you** as a member are more practical than legal, because each of them are necessary to maintain the relationships that are so valuable in the body of Christ. We expect our members to serve in the church, pray for the church, give to the church, read their Bible regularly, love their brothers and sisters in Christ, respect the authority of church leaders, attend worship services, and share the gospel with others in word and deed.

We're so excited to see you planted with us at The Gathering! Our prayer is that you will be “like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither.” (Psalm 1:3)

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Printed name

Signed name

Date