

# Connect Group: Best Practices

At theChapel, Connect Groups are free-market, where leaders are building groups based on the things they enjoy, are important to them or what they would already be doing. While these groups provide an opportunity to build community, (where life-change happens in the context of relationships!) theChapel Connect Groups also emphasize spiritual growth and depth.

## Here are a few key things to include in your Groups:

### • Prayer

- Create opportunities for people to share prayer requests and “praise reports”– ways God has answered prayers– each week. This is a huge piece of not only spiritual growth and depth, but also of helping your group feel connected to each other!
  - Our recommendation: take the last 15 min or so of your group meeting to do prayer requests and to pray specifically over the needs of your group. This also establishes a consistent rhythm to officially close out your time together.

### • Community

- Make it a priority to help your group members connect with each other! People join a group because they want to be known. As the leader, you have the unique opportunity to create environments and opportunities for people to get to know each other & the more comfortable they feel, the more they will open up and get more out of their group experience.
- Create a safe space for people. Here are 2 big ways to do that:
  - Always seek to be inclusive and gracious while also sharing truth in love. Your group will follow your lead and you have the spiritual authority to gently correct, and also the responsibility to encourage your members to keep growing and learning!
  - Be very clear and up front that what is shared in group is confidential, i.e. what is shared in group, stays in the group!
  - Bring snacks – food always creates easy connection points to get people talking
- Start a text group chat for your group (in the church center app): this will provide more opportunities for people to connect during the week and help the connections formed in the group feel more like friendship.

### • Facilitation:

- Your role in facilitating conversations in your group makes all of the difference in the experience your members have! Below are just a few reminders on how to make the group feel like a discussion.
  - Keep the 70/30 rule – your members should be talking the majority of the discussion time.
  - Remember ESPN:
    - Encourage - keep conversations life - giving, positive & encouraging
    - Scripture - people have a lot of opinions and feelings, but we uphold that Scripture holds the ultimate truth & the answers we need as followers of Christ
    - Prayer - Open and close in prayer. Some things you can try so your members stretch in this area: 1. Challenge your members to pray for each other in pairs. 2. Invite members to open or close in prayer for that week.

- Next Steps - always move the conversation towards how your members can APPLY what we are learning & discussing. Discussion questions will aim towards this, but you can take it a step further and help personalize a specific application with your members.

**Here is a timeline you can follow:**

**20mins** - Icebreaker/Get-To-Know-You

**45min** - Pray & Discuss Content

**25 min** - Prayer Requests & Pray

**A few notes on the above timeline:**

- This timeline is 90 minutes total, which will give you time to allow people to arrive slowly or spend a little extra time in which ever are a best meets your group's needs.
- Keep in mind that a group lasting longer than 2 hours is a BIG time commitment. We recommend keeping your group under the 2 hour mark to encourage members that we respect their time + leave them wanting to come back.