

A GUIDE TO

# Community Groups

Helping people  
meet, know and follow Jesus



THE CHAPEL  
**grouplife**





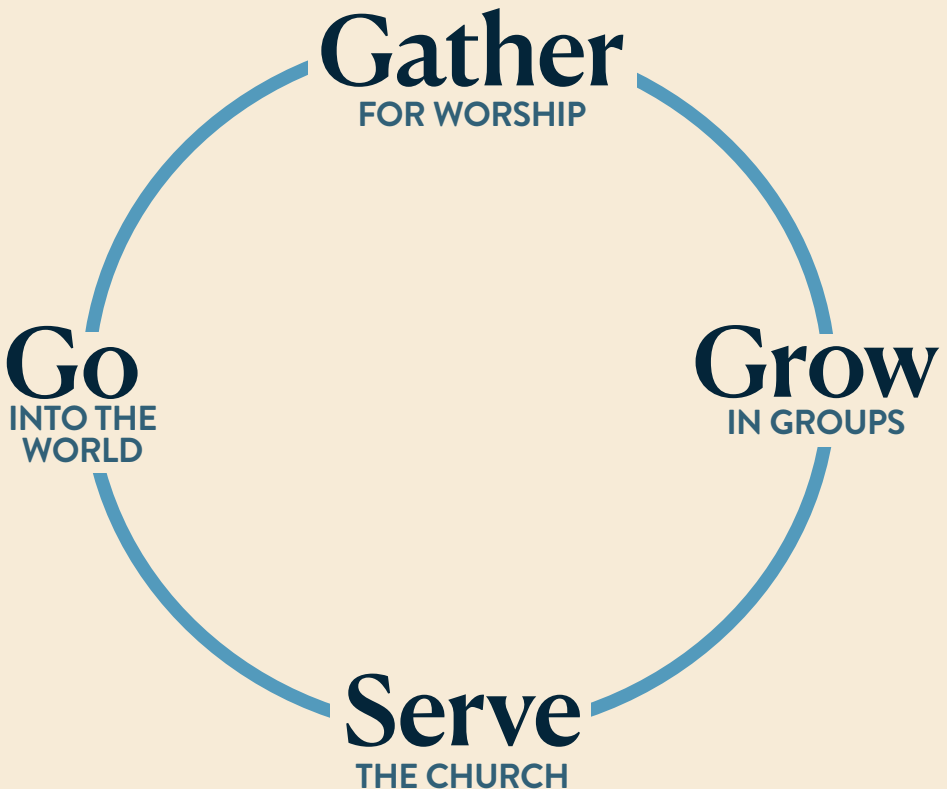
# welcome to the chapel

**Our mission at The Chapel is to help people meet, know, and follow Jesus.** Spiritual growth starts with authentically sharing your life with others. As a church, we place a high value on authentic relationships. Our grouplife ministry is at the heart of how we accomplish that and the way we measure success is through life change.

**We believe life change happens in circles, not rows.** In rows, we gain information through teaching. In circles, we experience transformation through relationships. One of the greatest epidemics in our society today is loneliness. Everyone craves authentic, meaningful connection and that is because God created us for community – both with Himself and with each other.

# *The* Discipleship *Pathway*

The pathway is how people engage with The Chapel and grow in their faith. We want people to **gather** in worship, **grow** in groups, **serve** with their gifts, and **go** by living sent.



# The Chapel's *Group Structure*

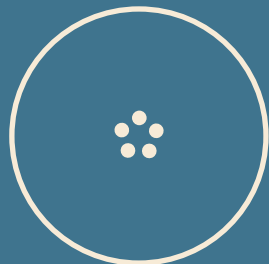
The Chapel's group strategy mirrors Jesus' ministry with three key environments.

**LARGE GROUP  
GATHERINGS**  
*"Crowds"*



**COMMUNITY  
GROUPS**  
*"12 Disciples"*

**D-GROUPS**  
*"Peter, James, & John"*



***THE DIFFERENCES***  
between  
***COMMUNITY GROUPS***  
and  
***D-GROUPS***

# COMMUNITY GROUPS

# D-GROUPS

Life-changing community of people who meet regularly to share their lives in authentic relationships

## Description

Gender-specific, closed group who meet weekly for structured discipleship

Not-yet, new, & mature believers

## Make-up

Believers

Co-ed or gender specific

## Dynamic

Gender specific

Open group

## Type

Closed group

10-20 people

## Size

3-5 people

Fall/Spring Semesters

## Time frame

Ongoing

Sermon-based discussion questions

## Curriculum

Chapel Bible Reading Plan

Socialize,  
Study,  
Support,  
Send

## Components

Accountability,  
Bible Reading,  
HEAR Journaling,  
Prayer, Scripture  
Memory

Add D-Groups and multiply into more Community Groups

## Growth Expectations

Disciples who multiply to make more disciples

# Components of a Community Group

In Acts 2:42-47 we see a snapshot of a community that produced incredible life-change. Our Community Groups are centered around four components we find in this passage. Note the following characteristics of the early church and look for them in the text to the right.

## ONE

They studied the apostle's teachings.

## TWO

They fellowshiped, met in homes, and broke bread.

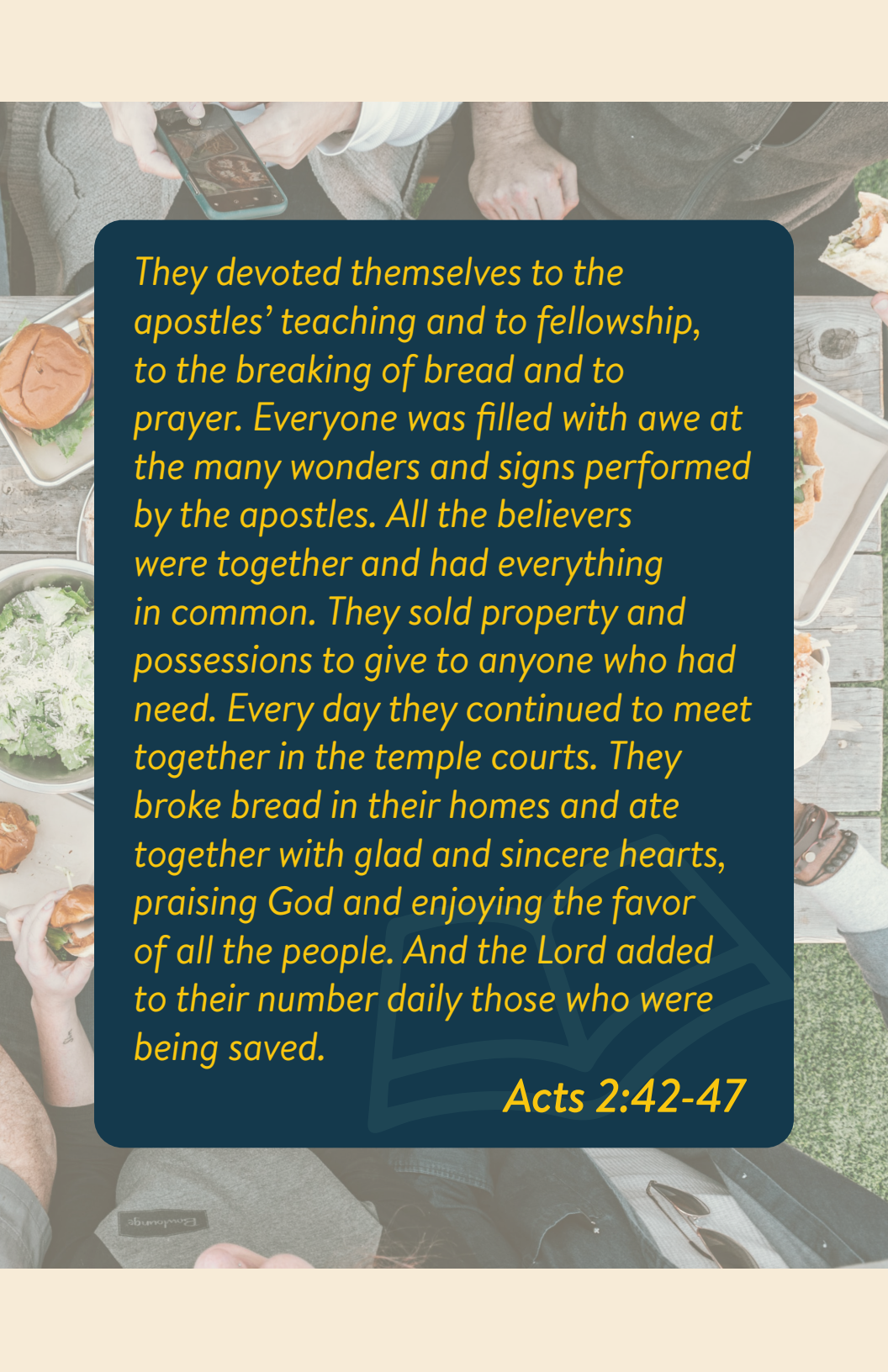
## THREE

They prayed, cared for, and met each other's needs.

## FOUR

They had a live sent mentality that motivated them to share the gospel with their friends, families, and communities.





*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

**Acts 2:42-47**



As they lived out these principles, the Lord added to their number daily (Acts 2:47, 6:7). Life-change was happening in abundance. As a result, the church grew and the gospel transformed the world.

At The Chapel, we have taken these four components and narrowed them down to four words:

*Study*      *Support*

*Socialize*      *Send*



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Being a part of a Community Group means you will focus on each of the four main components found in this passage.

On the next few pages we will look at each component individually, define how it will look in your group, and offer tips, ideas, and resources to help you succeed as a Community Group leader.

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Study Socialize Support Send

## SERMON-BASED BIBLICAL DISCUSSION

We place a high value on the Bible to guide and direct our lives. We believe it is sufficient and relevant for all issues in our lives. (Hebrews 4:12) During a Community Group's meeting, we start with the passage from Sunday's sermon and discuss the content and how it applies to our daily lives. Sermon discussion questions will be provided to aid in this conversation. The goal is to engage everyone in a time where people can ask questions and learn how others are applying Scripture to their lives.

All sermon discussion questions will be available for you on the Church Center app in Your Group>Resources Tab, or you can find them at [thechapelbr.com/group-life-resources](https://thechapelbr.com/group-life-resources).



# *Best Practices for Leading Group Discussion*

## **In Preparation**

- Watch/listen to the sermon.
- Take Notes – what do you find interesting, challenging, confusing?
- Preview Questions – review discussion questions in advance and tailor them to best fit your group.
- Provide questions (either paper or digitally) for your group to help members stay engaged in the discussion.

## **Discussion Tips**

- Be comfortable with silence – it allows people to process.
- Ask follow-up questions – “What do you mean?”, “Anyone else?”, “Tell me more.”
- Affirm others whenever you can.
- Involve everyone – the more people involved the better. Ask “who hasn’t shared yet?”
- Keep the discussion outsider-friendly. Don’t use insider or super-spiritual language.
- Begin and end the discussion on time.
- Always leave time for personal sharing and prayer.
- Don’t focus on getting through all the questions.
- Make sure discussion leads to application.
- Allow others to facilitate and ask questions. Always be looking for who you can raise up to lead.
- Get feedback. Always look for ways to improve.

# SSSS

*Study Socialize Support Send*

## **BREAKING BREAD & FELLOWSHIP**

Socializing was an integral part of the early church and is a priority in our Community Groups. Following the example found in Acts, we value sharing food, life stories, and daily experiences in order to strengthen relationships within the group and allow visitors to connect and feel welcome. When fellowship is embraced, it breeds authenticity and vulnerability which opens the door for people to share on an intimate level.



# *Fun, Food, & Fellowship Ideas*

- Offer a snack/drinks and allow time for socializing.
- Share a meal on occasion (either outside of group time or in replacement of a formal discussion).
- Calendar birthdays and special events and recognize them.
- Arrange for women and men to gather separately for a night out.





*Ice  
Breakers  
and  
Group  
Opener  
Ideas*



1. What's your favorite book or movie and why?
2. If money were no problem, where would you travel for a week and why?
3. When you need to confront someone, would you rather communicate in person, on the phone, by text, by e-mail, or by letter?
4. What is your most prized or sentimental possession?
5. One of my biggest pet peeves is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. People might be surprised to find out that \_\_\_\_\_.
7. You have three wishes. What would you wish for?
8. If you died today, who would give your eulogy, and what would be said?
9. What is the most daring thing you have ever done? What made it so daring?
10. My favorite way to waste time is \_\_\_\_\_.
11. What's your favorite birthday memory?
12. When was the last time you skipped school or work?  
Explain the situation.
13. Have you ever been let off the hook for a punishment you deserved? How did that make you feel?
14. What's the story behind the longest time you've gone without sleep?
15. If you could meet any living person, who would it be? Why?
16. Who is the most famous person you've known or met?  
How did it happen?
17. Whom have you lost touch with but still wonder about?
18. What do you miss most about your childhood?
19. What's the biggest lie you ever told?
20. If you could teach any class on any subject, what would you teach and to whom would you teach it?
21. Just for the fun/thrill of it, before I die I'd like to \_\_\_\_\_.
22. What's something you should throw away but can't? Explain.
23. What is your favorite city? Why?
24. What is the best gift you ever received as a child?
25. What do you like best about children? Why?
26. Who was the best boss you ever had? Why?



*Study Socialize Support Send*

## **PRAYER & CARE**

The early church prayed for one another and cared for each other's needs. Within our Community Groups we want members to intentionally make time to pray for one another and learn of ways they can support each other. When members enter a difficult season, we want their Community Group to be the first people to rally around them in support. This requires the leaders to model asking for help and seeking to learn how others need help.

*The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

*-James 5:16*

# Effective Group Prayer Strategies

## PRAY ONE TOPIC AT A TIME

After requests are taken, begin praying about one topic. Allow anyone in the group to pray about that specific topic. Members can even pray more than once about the same topic. Once it has been covered, move to the next topic.

## KEEP PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE. (MATTHEW 6:7)

Lengthy prayers make it difficult to keep everyone engaged and they intimidate those who are uncomfortable praying out loud. Aim for one or two sentences, which is easy to do if you are only praying one topic at a time!

This format allows the Holy Spirit to prompt people when to pray and how to pray. It may feel a bit awkward at first, but because it consists of short, focused prayers, everyone in the group can easily participate. And it just may become the best part of your group time!

For more on this, see Effective Prayer Strategy resource on our group resource page.

[thechapelbr.com/group-life-resources](http://thechapelbr.com/group-life-resources)

### Tips for Promoting Care and Support

- Allot time for people to share their struggles. Follow up later in the week with a text or call.
- Arrange for meals or other support if one member is in need.
- Model vulnerability by sharing your own struggles.



Study Socialize Support Send

## OUTREACH AND MULTIPLICATION

The ultimate goal of our Community Groups is to multiply into more groups. We do this by regularly striving to meet two goals: outreach and multiplication.

**Outreach** means we maintain a “live sent” mentality. Our Community Groups are always encouraging their members to look for godly interaction with those in their sphere of influence (neighbors, co-workers, and friends) with the hope of investing in and inviting them to a relationship with Jesus.

**Multiplication** means we intentionally aim to start new groups. The goal is not for a Community Group to become a holy huddle of friends, but rather a place to grow and train its members to start their own groups.

### How to Multiply Your D-Group

1. Identify a leader(s) you can apprentice each year to start a D-Group or new Community Group.
2. Invite them to GroupLife training events.
3. Provide opportunities for them to lead.
4. Coach them up to where they need to be.
5. Commission them as a group to be sent out.
6. Always send your best.

*And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples **multiplied** greatly in Jerusalem.*

- Acts 6:7

# Outreach

## *Maintaining a “Live Sent” mentality*

We help people meet, know, and follow Jesus through establishing what we call a “live sent” mentality. We want our members to always be on the lookout for how God can use them to further the Kingdom of God. A good way to develop this mindset is to adopt our strategy called Pray, Invest, and Invite.

### **Pray**

- Pray for those in your circles of influence (work, family, and neighborhood) that haven’t said yes to Jesus.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to equip you to share your faith.
- Pray that God would give you opportunities to share.

### **Invest**

- Find ways to connect with non-believers. Start a fantasy football league or a book club. Discover common interests.
- Aim to learn something specific about your neighbor/co-worker when you chat with them. Share something new about yourself.
- When they are hurting listen to them, write them a note, or offer to bring them a meal. Follow up with them in love.

### **Invite**

- Host a LSU watch party and invite them to join you.
- Ask them over for dinner, or go out to dinner.
- Invite them to help you with a project, or to go golfing, fishing, or shopping to get to know them better.
- Invite them to your Community Group.
- Invite them to The Chapel.

# Structuring *Your Community Group*

Though every group is different and life stages may require groups to organize their group structure differently, we do want every group to practice Study, Socialize, Support, and Send within their regular group rhythms. Here is a template that incorporates all four components:

## WEEK 1 SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION

**Socialize** – Start with a snack and 15-20 minutes of informal socializing. Possibly plan an icebreaker question to warm everyone up for discussion.

**Study** – Open with prayer and begin by discussing the passage and then answering the weekly discussion questions.

**Support** – Spend the last 20-30 minutes praying for one another. This can be done as one group or split with men and women meeting separately. Mix it up from time to time. When you pray, use the Effective Group Prayer Strategy noted earlier and enjoy a dynamic prayer time together. Pray for individuals you are investing in and inviting to something.

## WEEK 3 SPIRITUAL DISCUSSION

Follow the same structure as Week 1

## WEEK 5 (IF THERE IS ONE) YOUR CHOICE

Pick a format from a different week.



## WEEK 2 DINNER

**Socialize & Support** – Share a meal together. This can be potluck or take-out (with everyone pitching in to pay for it). If the host home isn't conducive for this, pick an alternative home. Building relationships while breaking bread is the goal.

- During your meal, ask intentional questions.
- Laugh and have fun together.

## WEEK 4 NIGHT OUT / SERVICE PROJECT

**Socialize** – If applicable, have either the ladies stay at the host home while the men enjoy a night out, and then switch it for the next month. Ideas for going out: bowling, dinner, laser tag, TopGolf, escape room, manicures, coffee/dessert. Choose an activity that promotes bonding. Ideas for staying in: board games, card games, sharing a meal, gender-specific discussion about a certain topic.

**Send** – Pick a local outreach event for your group to support. Ideas include helping with Wildwood, Fall Fest, Eggstravaganza, Welcome Week move-in for LSU students, or applying for a Go Grant and hosting a block party. Always be on the lookout for ideas from our Next Steps Team!

# First Month Essentials

## WEEK 1

### Break the Ice

Whether it is a brand-new group or a group that hasn't met for a while, chances are new people will be present. Take 20 minutes for introductions and have everyone share something interesting about themselves.

### Set Expectations

- Spend time talking through group dynamics.
- Read and discuss Acts 2:42-47.
- Introduce the four components that form the foundation to our groups (Socialize, Study, Support, Send).
- Discuss how you're going to structure your group each week to incorporate each component.
- How often will you meet? For how long (1.5 or 2 hours)?
- How will you organize childcare?
- Discuss a snack/dessert/meal schedule (if applicable).
- Groups thrive on participation. Discuss the importance of committing to the group through attendance and participation.





## WEEKS 2 - 4

### Plan a Social Event & Go Event

- Calendar a day/time the group can get together.
- Appoint someone to plan out the details of the activity.

### Introduce Pray, Invest, Invite Outreach Strategy

- Ask each person to identify one or more people they are praying for and working toward building a relationship with them.
- Use your prayer time each week to begin praying for those names.

### Establish a Rhythm For Sermon-Based Biblical Discussions

- Print sermon discussion questions both for leaders and members. Follow best practices for leading discussion (Refer to Study Page)





# Church Center App

to log into Church Center, go to  
[thechapelbr.com/mygroups](https://thechapelbr.com/mygroups)



All Community Groups are publicized on our website so we can easily point prospective members to it. There they can filter groups based on meeting day, neighborhood, stage of life, etc. and find the one that is right for them. We use Church Center to manage the details for each group.

As a leader, it is very important that you keep the information about your group current. Most details will rarely need to be updated, but attendance should be taken weekly.

**Group Details** - Using the Church Center site (on a computer/not mobile app), please go to the Settings Tab to manage the following information:

- Meeting Schedule
- Meeting Location – publicly only neighborhood will show, not physical address.
- Contact Person – if someone wants to join your group.
- Group Description – a short paragraph describing the details of your group.

**Roster** – Keep a current list of who's in your group. As you add new people, don't forget to remove members who have stopped coming.

**Attendance** – Using the Church Center app, please take attendance each time you meet. It only takes 30 seconds on your phone and it greatly helps us keep tabs on the health of our group ministry as a whole and ensure everyone interested in joining a group has found one.



**Thank you for helping us maintain a high level of organization!**



Join our Chapel GroupLife Facebook Page for ongoing coaching and updates.



[facebook.com/chapelgrouplife](https://facebook.com/chapelgrouplife)

THE  
*Chapel*