



Sermon-Based Small Group Ministry

VineBranch Community Church

www.vinebranchcommunity.com

The Christian life is a journey that is best traveled with others.

At VineBranch Community Church, we believe that our connection and commitment to other believers is vital. A primary way that we connect people with one another is through informal weekly gatherings known as Core Groups. These groups exist to promote the development of significant spiritual relationships centered around the study of God's Word. Each week we'll discuss a portion of God's Word as it relates to the current sermon series, with the goal of learning how to apply and live out our faith in our day-to-day experiences and relationships.

You will have opportunity to share what's happening in your life as well as learn how to care for one another through praying, listening, meeting needs, and encouraging or challenging one another as needed.

What are Sermon-based Small Groups?

Churches experience rich spiritual benefits by transferring material from their weekly messages into curriculum for their small groups. These "sermon-based groups" provide an opportunity not only for deeper Bible study but they also serve to increase unity within the church, and relieve the pressure of deciding what each small group will study.

The process begins as the pastor plans his sermon series and provides a study/discussion guide in advance each week for the congregation. Throughout the week group leaders utilize the guide to prepare themselves to simply facilitate discussion in their particular group. Group members utilize the guide as a tool to prepare themselves for the sermon as well as active participation in their group.

Advantages of Sermon-Based Small Groups

- **Increases Educational Impact.** Research demonstrates that when you make notes, during personal study and while listening to the sermon, then get together with others to discuss those notes, the educational impact and subsequent life change is greatly increased.
- **Reaches More People.** Due to the nature of these groups, a person can come into a group at any time being able to benefit from and contribute to the discussion right away. These groups are not restricted to meeting on one day of the week or at one particular location.

- **Sharpens Focus of the Church.** In most churches, everyone listens to the same message, which creates a sense of unity. But when a church uses sermon-based small groups, everyone *interacts* with the same message, which really sharpens the focus and moves the church from being just a crowd to a living, breathing community.
- **Integrates New Believers.** There is no reason for new believers to feel intimidated by being in a room with more mature believers. Everyone hears the same message and simply shares what they took away from it.
- **Acknowledges Busyness.** Most people have a lot on their plate, which means group members and leaders may appreciate having access to a simple process enabling them to achieve maximum impact from the sermon and from their time together with the group.
- **Unifies Church's Teaching.** Pastors normally cover a particular topic or series because they believe it to be important for the entire church. Knowing that the same topic will be covered both in worship gatherings and small-group meetings is very beneficial.
- **Applies Biblical Teaching to Daily Life.** Sermon-based small groups deal with the real needs of real people. They are able to spark both discussion and application on subjects that may often be ignored or tuned out on Sunday morning. Since application is the bread and butter of a sermon-based small group lesson, these groups are the perfect place to work out the practical application of the sermon.
- **Protects Against Heresy.** False teaching and doctrines can generally be avoided when guides are prepared by church leadership.
- **Helps with Leadership Recruitment.** You don't have to be a Bible scholar or a great teacher to lead a sermon-based small group, all you need to be is growing spiritually, excited about God's Word, and have the ability to draw people together.
- **Supports a Multi-generational Culture.** One of the precedents set in the bible for a sound church is the interaction of different age groups. There is much to benefit from when the older teach the younger (Titus 2) and when the younger are an example to other believers (1 Timothy 4:12).
- **Encourages True Biblical Community.** The "work" of ministry is for the whole church (Ephesians 4). There is no way church leaders can do it all. Bible study and discussion are important, but so is "being the church" outside of the building. Social gatherings, service projects, following up with people, etc. should naturally flow from these groups.

How do I find the right group for me?

No one is assigned to a particular group. Recommendations and suggestions can be made from church leaders or members of the congregation regarding a possible good place to start, but the important thing is that you find a group that you can really connect with. You may need to visit several groups before you find the right one. That is why our groups are easy to enter and just as easy to escape from. Our eyes are always open for the opportunity and need to develop new groups as well.