



So, you want to be a Small Group Leader?



Fantastic! One of the fundamental guiding values of Grace Community Church is “Maturity results from a balance of corporate worship celebrations and small group participation.” Why are small groups considered essential? Social science shows us the potency of change and establishment in a person’s life that happens in healthy groups, but let’s think of it this way: The Lord Jesus’s **choosing of the twelve disciples** was not arbitrary, it was *modeling* and nesting the Gospel in the wisest, most dynamic, and best way possible. The transformation God intends to create doesn’t just happen individually but also socially, within the context of others. In other words, in a **group**.

Do you want to be a part of that? Do you need to be a part of that? Read on!



What problem does Grace Small Groups solve? In a word: **Isolation**. The culture of the world teaches us that we should do it alone, to self-protect, and that it’s better to be safe than sorry that you let others in. The cause is easy to see: people can turn on you, take advantage of you, and violate you. So we hide, we construct the narrative, and we keep things surface-level.

But the price is loneliness. Loneliness is such a threat that the United Kingdom legislated a “Ministry of Loneliness” because it is a substantial threat to public health and well-being.

At Grace, we believe that God’s solution to the problem of isolation: **community**. Community – *Biblical* community – is not just a gathering of people, it’s the *intention* of our hearts *when* we gather. The Greek word is *koinonia* – *a sharing*. Grace Small Groups bring alignment to our mission (to help people find and fulfill God’s purpose for their lives) in three powerful ways: **character transformation** by Spirit-empowered contact, **social transformation** by intentional, open relationships, and **mission alignment** to corporately engage in making disciples.

Grace Small Group Ministry, therefore, becomes a fundamental expression of *intentional* Biblical community, shepherded by leaders of 4 – 12 people, coaching their groups toward maturity in Christ. Grace Small Groups is Grace’s strategy where community is both discovered and created.

This is Where You Come In

People who are sensitive to the Spirit won’t have to be convinced. **But they need someone who will raise the flag and call others to join them.** They need a leader. **Is that you?** That depends. Consider the following statements:

1. **You recognize that the person we are *becoming* is more important than the person we want others to believe about us.** A person who is mature in the faith doesn't care about religious activity; their love for Jesus, desire to be transformed by him, and ownership of Jesus's mission is the most important thing in their life. They have heard the Master's call to serve and feed his sheep. When they think of Jesus's words to them: "**A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another**" (John 13:34-35), they realize – and by extension, all Believers in Jesus – can't go back to the old ways. Jesus is transforming them into a differen't person. If that's you, then the next part is easy. Well, for the most part ...
2. **You are ready and eager to count the cost for Jesus and others.** Leading a small group will **cost you**. But if you think about it, *something*'s going to cost you time, talent and treasure. The question is: are those *things* worthy of it? Leading a small group will cost you at least four hours in your week for the group time, preparation, and working with your leadership team, apprentice and Small Group Coach. You'll need more time to think and pray more, too. If you're currently serving in a significant way at Grace you'll need to pray about whether or not it's time to simplify.
Leading a small group will require the **shifting of the cross**. By that we mean that now that you are asking people to follow you, you'll need to give the gifts of humility, empathy, patience, and allowance on a new level. God will give you the strength you need but know that it will take energy and time to accommodate.
Of course, there's the **logistics**: You'll need to pick a day and time, find a host home, how often you'll meet, how you'll handle childcare, figure out how to communicate with each other, the duration of the meeting, how to handle snacks and meals, etc. It's a lot. But powerful discipling doesn't come at bargain prices. A Grace Small Group Leader counts the cost by agreeing to five simple points:
 - Being a Member by attending and joining through Class 101.
 - Being in-agreement with the **Beliefs and Values of Grace**.
 - Willing to study and learn how to be an excellent small group leader.
 - Willing to meet at least 2x's a month with your Small Group **Coach**.
 - Willing to be led by **the pastor** overseeing Grace Small Groups.
3. **You believe in teamwork.** *Teamwork makes the dream work!* If you've never led a small group, it's best to find someone to share in the responsibilities of facilitation. Your **Small Group Coach** will be your biggest benefit. But it's helpful, and healthy, to find a **co-leader**, and build a team of a **Host Home**, and **Administrator**. *That said* ...

4. **You'll need to define your group's purpose and target audience:** This means sitting down and asking yourself:
 - a. **WHAT** is the purpose of YOUR group? Has God placed a burden for a specific **issue**?
 - b. What are your **expectations** for your group? Is there a **specific demographic** segment of Grace or Roswell that you're burdened for (e.g.: young adults, women, men, singles, marrieds, youth, etc.)? How will you know your group will be successful?
5. **You'll need to prioritize alignment:** Because Grace Small groups are an integral part of the whole, we want to be in **alignment with our Senior Pastor** and the pastoral staff. We do that by participating in specific “campaigns” or teaching series, prioritizing what the Spirit may be saying to *all* of Grace. Campaigns happen in the Spring and Fall Semesters. Recall that **childcare** is regularly scheduled during the spring and fall semesters – make sure you find out when to accommodate. Alignment also needs to be guided **within the group** by annually revisiting your goals and expectations with the group (see Group Covenant). Finally, you'll prioritize alignment **with your Small Group coach**. Every Small Group deserves to be supported and encouraged. You will be linked to a small group coach who is there to do three things: Get to know you and pray for you, encourage you, and gather **feedback** so that the leadership can more actively and accurately plan, support, teach, repair or restructure.

NOW WHAT?

If you're not interested and you've made it this far – Thank you for investigating!

But if you are intrigued – maybe even sense a calling, then **it's time to make the next step.**

Got questions? Make an appointment with Sean, Pastor of Maturity and set up a time to talk! Here's how: slee@roswellgrace.com or by cell (575) 317-4658.

Don't need to talk – just want to GO? Start by filling out the [Small Group Leader's Application form](#) (use your smart device to activate the QR code).



I want to be a small group leader!

Grace Small Group Values



We believe that the primary problem small groups solves is isolation: isolation from God, others, and even ourselves. At Grace we believe the Gospel reveals that it is impossible to heal ourselves – we need the whole Salvation Jesus paid for, and we need each other to form the matrix of further repair. That's why we believe in the following:

We believe in a culture of grace. Grace is the unconditional acceptance of others and yourself. We believe that everyone deserves to be included, embraced, valued, and part of a family.

We believe in safety. Safety involved feeling secure and protected from danger as well as openness and freedom to explore and try new things. This doesn't mean avoidance of discomfort but feeling safe because we are in a group of gracious people.

We believe in vulnerability. Vulnerability is showing up and courageously representing our authentic selves. This means sharing ourselves openly and honestly.

We believe in truth. Growth as a disciple means recognizing the reality of our immaturity and receiving the truth of who God has made us to become. Small groups offer a nutritive context where the truth can be reciprocally given and received.

We believe in ownership. Ownership is taking responsibility for your part in a problem conflict. This may be with a group member, a family member, a church member, or person in the context of our community.

We believe in repentance. Repentance recognizes that worldly, sinful, or unwise experiences, beliefs, and behaviors are ruinous to spiritual and emotional health. Repentance is the process of ridding ourselves with the power of the Holy Spirit and God's people to be transformed into someone else.

The Values and Beliefs of Grace Community Church

Values:

1. Jesus is the central focus of our lives.
2. People matter to God and to us.
3. Authentic change is possible through the power of God's Spirit and prayer.
4. We must love one another more than we love our opinions.
5. The Goal of our gatherings is to celebrate and worship God.
6. Our methods must be culturally relevant and our message biblically pure.
7. The ministry is the task of all the members, not just the paid staff.
8. Maturity results from the balance of corporate worship celebrations and small group participation.
9. Children and Youth will always be a priority in our ministry.
10. Integrity, accountability and excellence will guide every decision.

Beliefs:

1. We acknowledge the Creator-God as our Heavenly Father, infinitely perfect and intimately acquainted with all our ways.
2. We proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, God in the flesh, the object of our worship and the subject of our praise.
3. We recognize the Holy Spirit as the third member of the Godhead, incessantly at work convicting, comforting, guiding and gifting.
4. We affirm our confidence in God's inspired, authoritative Word. We treasure the truths of the Bible and respect its reproofs.
5. We confess that Adam's fall into sin left humanity without the hope of heaven apart from a new birth, made possible by the Savior's death and bodily resurrection.
6. We believe the offer of salvation is God's love gift to all. Those who accept it by faith in Christ, apart from works, become new creatures in him.
7. We anticipate our Lord's promised return, which could be at any moment.
8. We are convinced that all who have died will be brought back from beyond — believers to everlasting communion with God and unbelievers to everlasting separation from God.
9. We know the Lord is continuing to enlarge his Family, the Body of Christ universal, over which he rules as Head.
10. We are grateful to be a part of a local Church which exists to proclaim God's truth, to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to stimulate growth toward maturity and to bring glory to God.
11. We believe in the biblical definition of marriage between one man and one woman and in the sanctity of life.

The Grace Community Church Membership Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized, and being in agreement with Grace Community Church's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the Grace Community Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church.

- by acting in love toward other members
- by refusing to gossip
- by following the leaders

Romans 14:19, 1 Peter 1:22; Ephesians 4:29; Hebrews 13:17

2. I will share the responsibility of my church.

- by praying for its growth
- by inviting the unchurched to attend
- by warmly welcoming those who visit

1 Thessalonians 1:1-2; Luke 14:23; Romans 15:7

3. I will serve the ministry of my church.

- by discovering my gifts and talents
- by being equipped to serve by my pastors
- by developing a servant's heart

1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11-12; Philippians 2:3-4,7

4. I will support the testimony of my church.

- by attending faithfully
- by living a godly life
- by giving regularly

Hebrews 10:25; Philippians 1:27; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Leviticus 27:30

Grace Small Group Covenant



You've been in small, organized groups all your life and there were these unspoken rules that guided the group. But honoring, sacred fellowship requires specificity. At Grace, we call that a **Small Group Covenant**. A covenant is a special agreement that you make as a group that regard the expectations, goals, conduct, and process you make during your short time together. Briefly go over this at the beginning.

Because the pleasure and glory of God is our main desire, we desire excellence in:

- **AUTHENTICITY.** To the best of my ability, and as I learn to trust the group, I will show up and be me. Perhaps I've had to protect the "real" me from the cruel or stumbling intentions of others, but in this group, the presentations of ourselves is sacred. And we'll respect each other in that way.
- **LOVE.** I will love others in the way they need me to support them. I will be honest and share how I need their reciprocal support.
- **RESPECT.** I will actively listen. I will love people by respecting their right to have an opinion and not judge or correct them. I will respect myself by insisting my own right to my opinion.
- **TIME.** We will do our best to begin and end on time. This honors the lives of each member. This also means we'll prioritize our weekly meetings and times for reading, study, prayer, and occasional acts of service or activity outside of our normally set time.
- **PARTICIPATION.** This small group is helping me to learn it's okay to share my feelings and opinions and never judge nor feel the need to fix – or be fixed - by anyone. I will learn to become an "expert" listener, encourager, praise-giver, and pray-er.
- **RESPONSIBILITY.** We will do our best in sharing certain tasks whether it is hosting, facilitating, bring snacks, etc. If someone can't fulfill their responsibility for that week, they will earnestly find a replacement, and earnestly fill that need.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY.** We're learning to trust each other with our real thoughts and feelings – even our "heresies". We would never betray that trust by sharing any part of our conversation with people outside of our group without their expressed permission and only if it would be excellent and praiseworthy.
- **PRAYER.** It is a privilege to intercede for each member of my group by name before The Father at a time that's different from our group. I will hold those requests as sacred and will never talk about them outside the group without their permission.
- **CONTACTING.** Some form of group communication will be introduced – we will willingly participate. We'll keep appropriate emotional boundaries, but we will engage others in fellowship or prayer in accordance with the Holy Spirit, whether privately or personally.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY.** Each person is responsible for what they say, do, and promise. No one will ever be shamed, but problems will be fixed as quickly as possible. I will stand up for myself respectfully. I will apologize for words or actions that are inconsistent with love.
- **What do you hope to accomplish with each other at the end of your time?**

