

October 2019 Champions Discussion Guide

Care

- What do you like best about the small group you are leading for the Fall Small Groups Semester (Sep 1-Dec 6)?
- Share any testimonies or victories from your groups.
- Have you experienced any challenges?

Communicate

Celebrate // What are you personally celebrating?

Leadership Podcast // Text PODCAST to 25827 to get it sent to you each Monday morning.

Night of Prayer and Worship//Friday October 4th 7PM All Campuses.

Coach

In our first three videos we talked about why we have groups at our church, and why we encourage you to become a host. (If you haven't already watched these videos, please go back and watch before proceeding.) You can access the videos on the [Host Resources Tab](http://ChurchoftheKing.com/smallgroups) at ChurchoftheKing.com/smallgroups. We're also including the videos in the Leadership Community Weekly Update emails.

The next three Champion Team Discussion Guides will be based on each of these videos. Please plan on watching the video with your Champion team as the basis for your discussion time.

Today we'll talk about ways to help *Provide Community*. In our last video, we talked about *Pursuing People* by inviting them into a healthy environment where authentic relationship is modeled and offered in the context of community.

So, what is Community? Community is more than simply having some friends to hang out with. Community is having a sense of belonging in a group of people. Don't we all want to feel like we belong? Although the topic of community has been widely studied, I think it's safe to say from personal experience and observation that we all thrive when we're connected to a group and we feel we *belong*.

As you know, we always base what we do upon what we learn from the Bible, and it is full of examples of how Christian community works and what it's meant to be. Let's look at Hebrews 10:24 together. "*And let us consider how to **stir up** one another to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*" Notice the instructions here: The writer of Hebrews tells us not to neglect meeting with people (connecting with the community of believers). This tells us that being part of a group of believers is important. Biblical community is formed when people can connect around shared beliefs and experiences, mutual care, and responsibility. We all do better in our hearts when we're connected with a biblical community.

This is exactly what we encourage you as small group hosts to develop in your group. We want you to provide community. An environment of authentic community says to people, "*You are wanted and needed here.*" Community

imparts a sense of personal value, which creates a sense of personal safety and this sense of personal safety is a vital catalyst to spiritual growth! People engage where they feel safest and most *connected*. In biblical community we embrace one another and encourage each other to become all that God has designed us to become in Him!

So then, what are some keys to providing community in your small group? Let's look at four:

- 1) **Engage in open discussion.** As a host, the way you ask questions and respond to people can either open people up, encouraging them to share more, or it can shut them down. Be sure to ask open-ended questions, which are simply questions that can't be answered with "yes" or "no." Phrase questions in a way that will encourage a full response. For example, "Did you have a good day?" is a closed-ended question, but "What was a highlight of your day?" will get people talking.
- 2) **A second key to providing community is to pray together.** Prayer creates an atmosphere to connect to God and to each other. Praying together sets the stage to celebrate what God is doing in each other's lives and to support each other through any difficulties. Prayer is a simple way to come alongside one another.
- 3) **Third, be sure to have FUN together!** We all feel more connected to those we enjoy and have fun with! In our last video about pursuing people we talked about how having social or fun time together helps us connect. These fun times also help us grow in a sense of belonging and community. Be creative! Encouraging fun in your group time and outside your regular group time will definitely help you provide community.
- 4) **The fourth key to providing community is serving together.** Numerous studies have shown that shared experiences build a sense of community. Think through who you already feel most connected with and I expect you'll find that you went through something together or experienced something together that helped to bond you more deeply. One of the most effective ways to provide community is through serving together because it not only creates a shared experience, but shared experiences that include a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.

Discussion Questions:

- What is the best way to engage people in conversation in your small group? Give an example of an "Open Ended" question.
- How does praying together provide authentic community? What are some ways you implement prayer into your small group meeting? Talk about a time that God answered a prayer for someone in your small group.
- When was the last time you had FUN with your small group? What are some ways to create FUN in your small group? How often should you have FUN in your small group?
- Describe a difficult or challenging time that providing community deepened relationships with someone in your small group.
- How does serving together as a small group build community?

Action Steps:

1. Calendar – be intentional to schedule activities that create community
2. Connect – be intentional to find ways to be with the people you are leading

Prayer

Are there any personal needs or concerns that we can pray for as a team? Allow time for prayer requests.