



SETTING HEALTHY EXPECTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Start community group with an opening prayer.

(If the community group is new and there are people who don't know each other very well, take a moment for everyone to introduce themselves and share how long they been a disciple.)

Community isn't just a nice option; it's a need. God created us with a need for him and for other people. We are relational beings because he is a relational God. Community becomes the real-life setting where we learn to practice the love that our relationship with God produces in us.

1 JOHN 5:2-3

"This is how we know we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."

Our love for God is meant to shape the way we love one another. Following Jesus was never intended to be something we do alone. **God uses other people to help us grow, and he uses us to help others grow.** Over the next five weeks, we will explore the five values of Lighthouse and how they shape the kind of community we want to build together. The purpose of today is getting to know one another and laying a foundation for a healthy community group experience.

ICE BREAKER

Choose two of the four questions to answer:

1. What is your favorite movie? Why?
2. What was your first job? What do you remember most about it?
3. If your house were on fire, what three items (not people) would you try to save?
4. My favorite way to spend time is _____.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

Setting healthy expectations for our group gatherings is important because we all have different ideas about what should happen. We may have questions like, "How often will we meet?" or "What will we focus on when we gather?" Some will want as much social time as possible. Others will be more interested in Bible study. Still others may prefer more time in prayer.

All three are important to a healthy group experience. We can decide together how much time we want to spend on each. The important thing is that everyone knows what to expect.

HEBREWS 10:24–25

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

We want to pursue consistency without becoming too rigid. It’s okay to put aside the outline when life happens or a group member is facing a significant challenge. At the same time, we will do our best to stick to what we have agreed on as a group.

EPHESIANS 4:2

“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”

Community can be challenging because we are all different. Every group is made up of people with different backgrounds, personalities, and experiences. But the very thing that can make community challenging can also make it great. Jesus didn’t give us a specific system for growing in our relationship with him; he gave us one another. **He gave us community.**

We hope this group will provide you with deep community. Whether it does will be partly determined by factors outside your control, like group chemistry. However, some things *are* within your control. We would like for you to do three things:

1. **Show Up.** Let’s all make a commitment to be at group meetings. We can’t form community with other people if we aren’t around enough for them to get to know us.
2. **Join In.** Take part in group discussions. Don’t talk too much. Give others an opportunity to share and listen to what they say. Be an active part of the community you are trying to form.
3. **Be Real.** Let people get to know the real you. Healthy community requires honesty, vulnerability, and a willingness to share what is really going on in our lives.

CLOSING

Before ending the meeting, make sure to exchange contact information. Share birthdays and anniversary’s, so the group can remember to celebrate those special days. Explain your next meeting day and time. Also, **have people volunteer for the next five weeks to share their testimonies with the group.** End the gathering by asking three people to close out in prayer.