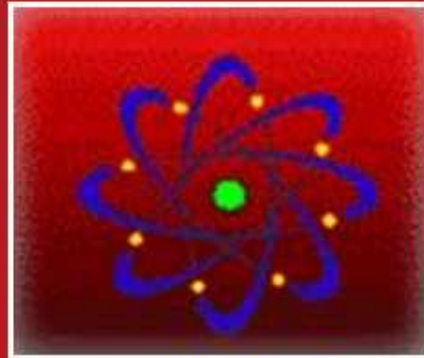




## Small Groups



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## **Why be involved in a Small Group?**

There is a powerful dynamic when we all meet together as one body on a Sunday and we hope you enjoy your time with us. If you want to get further involved with what we are doing you need to join one of our small groups. Why? Because it is only as we interact in small groups that we can really get to know each other and grow in our walk with God. Following are eight reasons to join!

### **1. You will understand the Bible better in a small group**

Talks on a Sunday morning are a good way to listen about Christian beliefs, you can learn much from the teaching, but the small group gives you the opportunity to join in discussions, ask questions and hear views of others in the group. This can really help when trying to apply what you have learnt to your own life. So the small group is the best place to help apply the teachings of the Bible to your own personal situation.

### **2. You will begin to really feel like part of God's family**

The small group is a natural place to develop relationships and close friendships often come as a result. You will also discover that others share the same needs and problems that you have and that together, with God's love, you can help each other through those difficulties. You will also share many good things and have fun together.

### **3. Prayer will become more meaningful to you**

Many people do not like to pray in front of others, especially in a large church meeting. In a small group, you can learn to take part in prayer by having a conversation together with God. No one is pressured to pray, but as you become comfortable, you will be able to pray sentence prayers and join in. There are many promises in the Bible related to group prayer. In praying together with a few others, we are drawn together and we find answers to the needs of our lives.

### **4. You will be able to handle stress and pressure better**

Small groups provide excellent support in times of crisis, change and stress. You will have a sense of stability and security knowing there are people who really care for you and are committed to standing with you. When someone loses a job, or a family member has an extended illness, these are practical needs that will be naturally taken care of through your small group. There are many other areas that the small group proves to be the natural place for support. If in a particular area the group finds it difficult to help they will be able to obtain help from others in the church.

### **5. You will have a natural way to share Christ with friends, relatives and work associates**

You may have some friends who do not know the Lord Jesus. They have a preconceived idea of what 'going to church' is all about. The thought of going to church on Sunday makes them defensive, but those same people may be open to an invitation to find out more about 'Jesus, the Bible and all that'. We have small groups where your friend can ask questions and express honest doubts without feeling 'put on the spot'. When your friend sees the love, warmth and honesty of those in the group, it will make him or her more open to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

## **6. You will develop skills you never knew you had**

The Bible teaches that every believer is given certain talents or 'gifts' to benefit others in the family of God. As you share and participate in a relaxed small group setting, you will discover your confidence and self-esteem rising. Will help you at work, at church and in every other relationship. Unfortunately some Christians miss out as they only attend Sunday mornings ... many as spectators. Therefore they don't discover their talents or 'gifts'. Don't be one of them.

## **7. You will deepen your understanding of worship**

'The Lord takes delight in his people' [Psalm 149 vs 4a]. True worship is something that brings delight to the Lord. It is not something that happens on a Sunday morning in a large group with songs, a sermon and an offering! True worship happens when we are focused on God. Sometimes it happens best in a smaller group when in prayer, singing together or when the group is doing something for God together

## **8. You will be a New Testament Christian**

The book of Acts is very clear about how God intends for his people to grow and have their needs met in church. We do not have enough professional leaders to meet all the individual needs in our family of God here at Thornbury. God never intended it to be that way! Consider these verses:

*'They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Every day they continued to meet together ... they broke bread in their homes and ate together ... and the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.'* [Acts 2 vs 42, 44, 46-47].

### **So why be involved in a small group?**

Over fifty times in the New Testament the phrase 'one another' is used to describe our relationship to other believers. We are instructed to love one another, encourage one another, pray for one another, accept one another, bear one another's burdens and build up one another. The only way you can obey these commands is in a small group. We really do need each other! God never meant for you to go it alone in the Christian life. Jesus said, 'My command is this: love each other as I have loved you', [John 15v12]. The eight reasons above show us that the best place this can be worked out is in a small group.

There are many small groups in our church, and there will be many more as we continue to grow. They include groups of all ages that meet in people's homes in what many would recognise as a home group setting. Other groups serve the wider church, such as the children's and youth groups, Worship teams, Prayer ministry team, Sports ministry, Shadows and other dance groups. There are many other groups that meet for a special purpose: Life worth living, Luncheon club and so on.

If you are not in a group, why not join one this week?

To find out more about the types of groups that meet ask a friend you know who is in one or contact the church office ... they will help to connect you with someone who can help.