

- **LifeGroups at GCR are small communities of believers who joyfully exist to Win, Build, Equip and Multiply disciples of Jesus Christ for the glory of God**
- **Goal of LifeGroups: BIBLICAL COMMUNITY. Acts 2:42ff**
 - **Our LifeGroup meetings should contribute to that goal.**
 - **It is OK to ignore the MEETING AGENDA when the Holy Spirit lets us minister to each other.**
- **Every Meeting should have 4 parts:**
 - **WELCOME**
 - This time opens the door for us to experience the ONE ANOTHERS of scripture. The Welcome time enhances the open SHARING of our PERSONAL lives.
 - **WORSHIP**
 - This time allows us to experience the PRESENCE and POWER of God. As we focus our attention on God, the Holy Spirit leads us to deeper FELLOWSHIP.
 - **WORD**
 - This time allows us to come face to face with the WORD of God. We help each other HEAR and OBEY what God is saying.
 - **WORKS**
 - This time helps us turn our attention to OTHERS. We grow together as we SERVE together.
- **WELCOME**
 - **Creating community**
 - Defining community
 - It happens when we are sharing life together while growing in transparency, nurturing the freedom to be who you are and learning mutual acceptance. We must build safe fellowship.
 - It is also a process that is learned and takes TIME. It is something we must work toward and pursue. This is why we are commanded to love deeply. (I Peter 4:8)
 - In community we share common vision, purpose, values and priorities. Once it is tasted, you will always desire it. (Ephesians 4:11-16)
 - The two primary barriers to community are that we instinctively hide (Genesis 3:7) and judging (Matthew 7:1-5)
 - Remember that while different levels of community are normal, we must intentionally move toward deeper fellowship. The next level of fellowship is always frightening. 101, 201, etc.
 - Remember the speed of the leader is the speed of the team.
 - The LifeGroup Life Cycle

- Forming Stage—Begin to know each other.
 - Conflict Stage—Evidence of different values; iron sharpening iron.
 - Community Stage—Past conflict to deeper fellowship. Danger.
 - Ministering Stage—Focus on outreach and discipling of each member.
 - Multiplication Stage—Excitement about releasing leadership and gifts.
- **Creating a welcoming environment**
 - Getting Ready Before Members and Guests Arrive
 - Before meeting, invite Christ's presence. (Matthew 18:20)
 - Make room in your heart for those who visit. (2 Corinthians 7:2)
 - Keep main gathering area uncluttered—have seating ready beforehand.
 - As Members and Guests Arrive.
 - Greet and welcome people with affection as they enter your home. Make sure you personally greet everyone who comes.
 - Serve light snacks to create a welcoming atmosphere.
 - Observe how conversations flow as people eat, drink and visit.
 - Be alert to greet those who are alone and first time visitors.
 - If the meeting is in another member's home, arrive early in order to greet everyone when they arrive.
 - Stay on your feet during the Welcome to visit and wait for late-comers.
 - As Members and Guests Leave
 - Insure that the host's home is clean from the meeting.
 - Encourage members to help rearrange furniture.
 - Offer thanks to the host for their hospitality.
 - Bless the home and family of the host during the closing prayer.
 - **Ice Breakers—A Powerful Tool**
 - Purpose of Ice Breakers – There is A Reason for the Madness
 - They give everyone a chance to laugh and smile
 - They get adults and children talking in an informal way. It helps everyone relax.
 - They help members get to know one another. It provides memory pegs.
 - They draw visitors into the group in a non-threatening way.
 - They stimulate sharing later during Worship, Word and Works.
 - They serve as a practical reminder that we don't need to be so "spiritual."
 - **Choosing an Ice Breaker**

- Choose ones your group would enjoy. Keep the group in mind.
- Vary the level of openness requested.
- Encourage everyone to participate—kids too.
- Keep them simple.
- **Tips and Tools**
 - Use the first 5-15 minutes for Welcome and Ice Breaker
 - Keep one eye on your watch and one on the group interaction.
 - Spread the “doing” of hospitality and ice breakers around. Delegate.
 - Remember the goal is to have every member be encouraged during the meeting.
 - Be alert during the ice breaker for members with needs.
 - Simple ice breakers equal quicker response and more time for all to share.
 - Avoid complex ice breakers that take a lot of time to answer.
 - Try the ice breaker while everyone is standing.
 - Include the children when you can.