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All Scripture is from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.

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## WHY SMALL GROUPS EXIST

Small Groups have one, simple purpose—to bring people together. We believe God created us to live in community with others and only then can we experience the full life He intends for us.

We believe life change happens in the context of Relationships.

Meaningful relationships can be hard to find, and Small Groups exist to make life-changing relationships relevant and accessible to you.

*Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

**ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12**

### RESTORATION CITY CHURCH Small Groups Model

At Restoration City Church we believe our church must grow larger and smaller at the same time.

We grow larger to reach as many people as possible with the life-giving message of Jesus. We gather in Small Groups to build community and care for people.

Restoration City Church is a church of Small Groups, not a church with Small Groups.

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We base our Small Group model on the early church as described in the Bible in the book of Acts. In Acts, you can read about the tremendous growth of the first church in Jerusalem, where small group meetings in homes helped lay the foundation.

*Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.*

**ACTS 5:42**

Small Groups offer people:

1. A Place to connect

*Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Christ and let Christ save him.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 9:22 TLB**

We were not made to do life alone. God created us for community, and Small Groups provide a place to connect with others, share life, and grow in faith together.

2. A Place to protect

*We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters.*

**1 JOHN 3:16 NLT**

It is through life together that our problems become smaller, and God uses others to bring support and encouragement to our lives. Small Groups become a place where others don't just know your name, but care about what is happening in your life and want to support you in your spiritual journey.

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### 3. A Place to grow

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.*

**PROVERBS 27:17**

We believe every person is created with God-given potential to make a difference in the world. Small Groups are a place you can grow with others to become more like Jesus and reach the potential God has put inside you.

Small Groups are not a place for:

- Business
- Offerings
- Unapproved materials or speakers
- Controversial topic

How to create good group dynamics:

- Set expectations.

A key to helping people feel comfortable in your group is to let them know what to expect. Take time to share how the group will flow from week to week. This can include things like explaining the times you will begin and end the group, how discussion or group activities will happen, and how group members can share prayer requests or best engage in the group.

- Follow the 70-30 rule.

Give the members of your group room to speak up instead of doing all the talking yourself. About 70% of talking should come from members and 30% from the leader.

- Keep discussion positive.

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If conversation takes a negative or destructive turn, guide it back to a healthy place. If someone needs to talk about a sensitive or complex issue, you can follow up with them after the group or call your coach to help you respond well.

- Keep the conversation relevant to everyone.

Remember people in your group will be at different places in their spiritual journey. Be thoughtful when you talk about spiritual concepts or church terms that might be unfamiliar to new Christians or new church-goers.

- Respect boundaries.

Men should minister to men and women should minister to women. A couple may minister to a single person. We want to maintain integrity and purity in our Small Groups. These boundaries will help protect the leaders and group members from entering into an uncomfortable inappropriate situation

## Your Role as a Small Group Leader

God has a part for all of us to play in the church, and Small Group Leaders come alongside the pastors and staff of Restoration City to help care for people.

*Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ.*

EPHESIANS 4:11-13 NLT

The primary role of a Small Group Leader is to help group members move one step in their walk with God.

*Be sure you know the condition of your flocks, give careful attention to your herds;*



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People in your group will be at different places in their spiritual lives and each person will have different Next Steps to take. Here is a guide of some Next Steps you can help people take:

- Start attending Sunday services
- Start reading the Bible regularly
- Start praying regularly
- Be water baptized
- Complete the Restoration City Growth Track
- Join the Dream Team
- Start tithing
- Attend a Restoration City conference or outreach events
- Invite a friend or neighbor to church or a Small Group
- Attend a Small Group Leadership Training to become a Small Group Leader

How to be a successful Small Group Leader:

1. Pray daily for the members of your group.
2. Consider partnering with a co-leader to help share the responsibility of caring for and leading your group.



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3. Connect with group members between weekly meetings through phone, email, text, social media, or face-to-face. Encourage group members to connect with each other throughout the week as well.
  4. Have fun through laughter and by creating an enjoyable environment.
  5. Respect people's time by beginning and ending your group on time.
  6. Invite group members to attend church services and events with you like Sunday services, conferences, or outreach opportunities.
  7. Rally the group around a member going through a crisis. Use wisdom and be sensitive.

### The Importance of Prayer

Prayer is a foundation of our church, and it is important for your Small Group.

*If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

**2 CHRONICLES 7:14**

How to pray for your group:

- Pray for any requests group members share.
- Ask for the presence of the Holy Spirit in your group.
- Pray that God will open people's hearts to hear His truth.
- Pray for an authentic community to develop.
- Pray for wisdom and strength to lead your group well.

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# The Shepherd Factor

As a leader (shepherd) our responsibility is to ensure the safety and health of the people entrusted to us by first God and then our Pastor. We are the last line of defense against the wolves that look to devour our sheep. We are not a church with small groups but a church of small groups. The responsibility is up to us!! Are you ready to pick up your staff (weight and responsibility) and Shepherd the flock?

## WHAT IS A SHEPHERD?

A person who protects, guides, or watches over a person or group of people.

*Matthew 9:35-36 ESV And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he SAW THE CROWDS, he had COMPASSION for them, because they were HARASSED AND HELPLESS, like SHEEP WITHOUT A SHEPHERD.*

## JESUS IDENTIFIED TWO QUALITIES THAT SHEPHERDS MUST HAVE OR DEVELOP:

**1. Sight:** He SAW, to be aware, perceive, and understand. (V.36)

**2. Compassion:** Moved by sympathy. It's when your emotional state changes to the emotional state of the people you're observing thus propelling you to move and do something about it. (V.36)

At times life can get so busy that we run the risk of falling into the "church trend" (go to church, be blessed in the services, volunteer minimally, and leave to focus on our life and what we have going on, repeat). Identifying the needs of others,

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becoming the vehicle that brings them closer to Christ, closer to their assignment can become secondary to our personal desires.

## **THIS IS WHAT MAKING DISCIPLES LOOKS LIKE**

### **“THE” CHURCH RESPONDS TO THE CALL**

The call to shepherd the harvest does not only pertain to the Pastors. It is the responsibility Jesus gave to all. Jesus utilized this approach to reach the masses. He understood that through relationships the harvest would be well kept and brought to their full revelation of their divine assignment.

## **QUALITIES OF A SHEPHERD**

A true shepherd is always reminded of these very essential qualities:

1. A Shepherd follows his Lord's example
2. A Shepherd is a Guide
3. A Shepherd does not seek Self Exaltation
4. A Shepherd Nurtures
5. A Shepherd Protects
6. A Shepherd cares for the needs of others

## **How do we Shepherd?**

1. **Know the Condition of Your Flock**
  - Follow the status of your people as well as the status of their work.

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- Get to know your flock, 1 sheep at a time.
  - Engage your people on a regular basis.
  - Keep your eyes and ears open, question, and follow through.

## 2. **Discover the Shape of Your Sheep**

- Your choice of Sheep can make flock management easier or harder.
- Know the SHAPE of your sheep.

**S: Strengths**, this allows you to know what areas need to be developed.

**H: Heart**, this speaks of passion, remember we don't have to, we get to. Do they have a heart for the house?

**A: Attitude**, is it an attitude of gratitude or 1 of negativity. Remember a sheep is a reflection of their shepherd. We must protect the new believers who walk into this small group.

**P: Personality**, are they people or task oriented, how do they respond to other people. Do they represent the vision of the house in their actions?

**E: Experience**, some sheep need more attention than others. Be available for questions.

## 3. **Help Your Sheep Identify With You**

- Build trust with those you lead by modeling authenticity, integrity, and compassion.
- Set high standards of performance.
- Constantly remind them and communicate Restoration City values and mission.
- Remember leadership is not just a role, or title , it's personal.

## 4. **Make Your Pasture Safe (Small Groups Homes)**

- Keep people well informed.
- Make sure they feel important and appreciated.
- Address constant instigators.

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- Reassure the sheep by staying visible (Your presence makes a difference).
  - Don't give problems times to fester (confront problems with love)  
Remember you must connect before you can correct, meaning it happens in the context of genuine relationship.
- 5. The Staff of Direction**
- Know where you're going (Restoration City's Vision for Small Groups), and keep your flock headed in that direction.
  - We have set boundaries (fences), sheep need boundaries but they don't need to be micromanaged.
  - When you sheep get in trouble, go and get them out. (Pastoral care)
  - Remind them that failure is not fatal.
- 6. The Rod of Correction**
- Protect: Stand in the gap and fight for your sheep.
  - Correct: Approach correction as a teaching opportunity.
  - Inspect: Regularly check in on your sheep.
- 7. The Heart of The Shepherd**
- Great leadership is a lifestyle not a technique.
  - Everyday you have to decide who's going to pay for your leadership, you or your people.
  - Most of All Have a heart for your sheep.

## **HOW DO WE DO OUR PART?**

We Create a Next Step Culture: The Small Group Environment strives to provide:

- **ENCOURAGEMENT**
- **SCRIPTURE**
- **PRAYER**
- **NEXT STEPS**

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### **ENCOURAGEMENT:**

Hebrew 10: 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 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.

### **SCRIPTURE:**

2 Timothy 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God[a] may be complete, equipped for every good work.

### **PRAYER**

James 5:16

16 Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be whole. The effectual prayer of the righteous is very powerful.

### **NEXT STEP**

John 15:8

8 By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples

## **ARE YOU READY TO MAKE DISCIPLES?**

Everyone, no matter how long you've been at Restoration City, has a next step. For some that is to grow closer in relationship with Christ, to strengthen your faith walk through scripture and accountability via community. For others, that next step is to transition from being a disciple to making disciples.

### **How do you determine if you're ready?**

- How's my prayer life?
- Do I have a shepherd? ( Are you allowing yourself to be shepherded?)
- Am I easily offended?
- Do I shy away from correction?
- Am I led easily by my emotions, instead of my convictions and beliefs?
- Do I believe in the full canon of the Bible? (I do not pick and choose)

The Bible teaches us to study ourselves to be approved:

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The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.

1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10 MSG

## **HONOR CODE**

As an essential part of the Restoration City Church leadership family, you have a responsibility to develop and exhibit mature Christian behavior. This should be the heart of your desire to serve in a leadership position here at Restoration City..

While serving the Body of Christ as a Small Group Leader at Restoration City, you pledge to present a good appearance at all times. In both attire and behavior, you should strive to demonstrate Biblical standards in all situations.

As Christians, the way we present ourselves can influence the way others perceive Christ. Our conduct should never be an embarrassment to Christ, but should exemplify the best qualities of a mature believer and servant-leader.

Exemplifying the highest moral commitment, Restoration City leaders are to maintain a disciplined life of Bible reading, prayer, and fasting. You must also refrain from such things as:

- Profanity
- Smoking or chewing tobacco
- Gambling
- Indulging in much wine or other alcoholic beverages

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## Dishonest gain

- Illicit drugs
- Pornography
- Sexual immorality, and all behaviors which might cause Christ to grieve and others to stumble

By providing an example in speech and action, we encourage others to grow in Christ and become servant-leaders themselves. This is a way of life measured by the heart and commitment of each leader in the Restoration City family. We should regard it as an essential part of our development, not as an imposition or restriction.





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## LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

*The same goes for those who want to be servants in the church: serious, not deceitful, not too free with the bottle, not in it for what they can get out of it. They must be reverent before the mystery of the faith, not using their position to try to run things. Let them prove themselves first. If they show they can do it, take them on. No exceptions are to be made for women—same qualifications: serious, dependable, not sharp-tongued, not overfond of wine. Servants in the church are to be committed to their spouses, attentive to their own children, and diligent in looking after their own affairs. Those who do this servant work will come to be highly respected, a real credit to this Jesus-faith.*

### 1 TIMOTHY 3:8-10 MSG

#### Qualifications

- Sincere, worthy of respect, and of a good reputation.
- Tithe regularly to Restoration City Church.
- Have a genuine desire to serve and minister to other people.
- Able to lead, motivate, and teach other people.
- Able to create positive group dynamics, and deal with conflict resolution within the group.

## ABUSE POLICY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I understand that Restoration City Church is a safe place for children and vulnerable adults and that Restoration City complies with all Federal and State laws regarding reporting suspected child abuse. As a Small Group Leader, I understand that suspected abuse is to be reported to the staff member who oversees the area in which I serve. I also understand the 4 types of abuse defined below:

**Physical:** A physical act directed at a child or vulnerable adult that causes injury;

**Sexual:** Contact or interactions between a child and an adult, or another child, when the child is being used for sexual stimulation of the perpetrator or another person. This includes exploitation through photographs, videos, or other communication methods;

**Emotional:** Acts or omissions by the parent or other caregivers that have caused, or could cause, serious behavioral, cognitive, emotional, or mental disorders;

**Neglect:** Failure to provide for the child or vulnerable adult's basic needs. This includes adequate adult supervision, medical attention, housing, food, and clothing. Most cases of physical neglect involve inadequate adult supervision that has caused harm to the child or vulnerable adult, or places them in danger of such harm.

I understand it is not my responsibility to investigate and in no instance will I confront a parent or caregiver if abuse is suspected. As a Small Group Leader, I agree to comply with this policy and report any suspected abuse to the staff person who oversees the area in which I serve.

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## HELPFUL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

At Restoration City Church we believe ministering through the Word of God is the most powerful way to care for people. As you pray over a Small Group member, try inserting that member's name in the Scripture to make it more personalized.

As a leader, we encourage you to find and memorize at least three Scriptures, which will equip you when you are walking someone through a tough situation, as well as give you strength as a leader throughout the semester.

Here is a list of powerful Scriptures that you can apply to any situation:

*“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”*

**MARK 12:30-31 NKJV**

*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:13 NKJV**

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.*

**PROVERBS 3:5-6**

*My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts,” says the LORD. “And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. For just as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

**ISAIAH 55:8-9 NLT**

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.*

**1 JOHN 5:14-15**

*No weapon formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue which rises against you in judgment you shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.*

**ISAIAH 54:17 NKJV**

*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.*

**EPHESIANS 6:10-28**

*And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*

**ROMANS 8:28 ESV**

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*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago*

**EPHESIANS 2:10 NLT**

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

**JEREMIAH 29:11**

*You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

**MATTHEW 5:14-16**

*No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**ROMANS 8:39 NLT**

*Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never, never fail you nor forsake you." That is why we can say without any doubt or fear, "The Lord is my Helper, and I am not afraid of anything that a mere man can do to me."*

**HEBREWS 13:5-6 TLB**

*Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*

**ISAIAH 41:10 NLT**

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

**PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

**JAMES 1:2-4**

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

**1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-7**

*So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*

**ROMANS 10:17 ESV**

*One day the apostles said to the Lord, “We need more faith; tell us how to get it.” “If your faith were only the size of a mustard seed,” Jesus answered, “it would be large enough to uproot that mulberry tree over there and send it hurtling into the sea! Your command would bring immediate results!”*

**LUKE 17:5-6 TLB**

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

**HEBREWS 11:1**

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*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.*

**JAMES 1:5**

*Where there is no guidance, a person falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

**PROVERBS 11:14 ESV**

*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus. And because you belong to him, the power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you from the power of sin that leads to death.*

**ROMANS 8:1-2 NLT**

*“Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the Lord. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*

**ISAIAH 1:18**

*Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope. For we believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him.*

**1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-14**





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