

Christ Church Downend &...

Home Groups



Home Groups at the Heart

What it means to be part of a Home Group at Christ Church



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The vision for this church is that every member will be committed to building loving relationships in three dimensions – up towards God, in towards each other and out towards the world. Home Groups offer an ideal environment for this to happen.

The 200 plus members of Home Groups at Christ Church are finding that the sense of belonging that comes with meeting each week with the same 8 to 12 people is of special significance, and means that there is often a high degree of commitment to those who belong to the group.

Alongside this, there is also a commitment to grow, and members are encouraged to invite others with whom they are forming friendships. As the numbers grow, the group will reach a point where it gets beyond a manageable size (for the front room at least!). At that point there will be a need to consider 'multiplying', which involves the one group becoming two, with fresh leadership and another venue. Into these two smaller groups new members can be welcomed and the groups will

continue to grow. There is, therefore, a settled but not stagnant dynamic to the group's ongoing life. The analogy with the cells in a living body dividing and multiplying is particularly appropriate to describe this process.

Christ Church puts Home Groups at the heart of all it does. Everyone is encouraged to be part of this network of relationships through which the life of God is flowing, in three directions:



PURPOSE: to grow in love for God
KEY VALUE: Deepening Spirituality

What does this look like in practice?

Different ways of worship and prayer are experienced.

For some groups this has included exploring creative approaches such as going outside into the garden and listening, drawing or painting, writing poetry, or silent reflection on visual images.

The Bible is valued as a source of wisdom for living life today, and the place where God speaks to us most clearly. Many people in our groups find the support and encouragement they receive from sharing fresh insights into God's Word to be invaluable in living out their faith in the workplace or the home. The emphasis is on

application rather than information – there are no experts, just everyone growing closer to God together.



PURPOSE: to grow in love for each other
KEY VALUE: Creating Community

What does this look like in practice?

Everyone looks out for each other. In a bigger church, it's often easy to feel rather lost and left out, but in a small group there is the chance to get to know others and be known for who you really are. This is especially



appreciated when life gets tough and a helping hand is what's needed. Some of the practical expressions of this dimension might include cooking a meal when the pressure's on, looking after another member's children, praying for the person who is facing a job interview in the week, and giving them a call to see how it went!



THINKING OF JOINING A GROUP?

Please do get in touch with Shahne or Jo Vickery. They will chat with you about finding a group that will be good for you. You may already have friends who you can link in with, and some ideas about best days of the week. They'll do their best to make it work!

Contact details at the bottom of this page.

Special things are remembered. Celebration is important for us at Christ Church. People get together for birthdays and BBQs, some families even camp together in the holidays. Sad times such as an anniversary of a bereavement can be marked and memories shared.

OUT

PURPOSE: to grow in love for the world
KEY VALUE: Transforming Action

What does this look like in practice?

There is a particular emphasis on listening to the needs of the community/issues facing society, and praying for local and global concerns. One specific 'Transforming Action' is agreed upon by the group and steps are taken to participate in that initiative for 'a season'. Home Groups do this in so many different ways. Some may decide to visit a local Residential Home and befriend residents. Others support the work of local or international charities or run a regular welcome evening for new people thinking of belonging to Christ Church. All groups are encouraged to take action in the light of climate change. In this process, people's gifts will be developed, and sometimes discovered!

At Christ Church we are very committed to giving others the opportunity to find a living faith. Our regular Alpha courses are supported by all the Home Groups, and invitations to friends are made with a view to encouraging them to explore some of the big questions of life. Specific prayer is offered for people to become Christians and find God purposes for their lives.

For more information about Home Groups please get in touch with Shahne or Jo Vickery on: t: 0117 9089868 or e: homegroups@christchurchdownend.com. Alternatively, visit our website at www.christchurchdownend.com.