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COFFEE GROUPS

a place to DISCOVER Jesus in the scriptures, NURTURE the truths of the Gospel,
ACT in obedience (3 to 5 people / same gender)

INTRODUCTION

WHY READ THIS?

Not understanding the purpose and process of a coffee group can lead to confusion and frustration:

- “We never get past talking about our week.”
- “He always dominates the conversation.”
- “I’m not sure I’m getting anything out this group.”
- “Is this just a glorified hang out time?”
- “This just feels like something else I’ve had to add to my busy schedule.”
- “When our ‘leader’ isn’t there we’re not sure what we’re supposed to do.”
- “These people don’t have anything to offer me.”
- “I don’t have anything to offer this group.”

To prevent or handle these frustrations, it is well worth the time of each person in a coffee group to understand the content in this guide. Here are a few ways you might do this:

- Read and Discuss with your coffee group prior to your first “official” meeting
- Walk through this information at an MC family meal
- Attend a Coffee group Training

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

Ephesians 4:15-16

PURPOSE

WHAT?

A coffee group is a gender specific group of 3 – 4 people who meet on a regular basis (weekly or bi-weekly) to fight sin and suffering together with the gospel through discovering Jesus in the Word of God.

WHO?

- It is ideal that the people in a coffee group are also in the same missional community. In times of mc multiplication where it may disrupt growth it may be best to stay together until a transition can happen with health.
- It is also helpful that those in a coffee group have complementing schedules that allow them to meet regularly.

HOW MANY?

- 2 people often merely reflect each other and miss out on the advantage of another perspective and gifting. Also, if one person misses then the meeting is off.
- Having more than 4 people limits the possibility of having the time needed for each person to share and be shepherded.
- 3 is ideal, but 2 or 6 is better than nothing. In the case of 2 be praying for a 3rd person and in the case of 4 or more be planning for multiplication.

WHEN?

- If members of a coffee group do not commit to a weekly or bi-weekly meeting time and place it will become very hard for the group to gain any unity and momentum for growth.
- While each group needs to be flexible and at times creative in their meeting time and space, a commitment to the group is essential (even if some weeks you have to have a meeting via Skype, GroupMe, or text).
- Whenever a coffee group meets, there should be enough time given (1 – 2 hours) to bring the Word of the Gospel to the lives of the group.
- If possible, it is best if a set time and place can be established so that a group can mark it on their calendars as a priority to be scheduled around and not a possibility to be considered on a weekly basis.
- Hopefully, those in a coffee group will also be connecting throughout the week in other less formal ways as well as a part of their mc family identity.

WHERE?

- Wherever you can find a space to read, talk openly and honestly and have the ability to stay focused. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Being together with distractions is better than not being together at all.
- A public space (restaurant, coffee shop, etc.) has the advantage of regular engagement in a place where the group might find favor and gain influence, but has the disadvantage of potential distractions (waiter, food?), interruptions (other friends), and the uneasiness to give full disclosure in sharing.
- A "private" space (room at home, church building, etc.) has the advantage of relaxation for full disclosure and the ability to more easily dive right into the process but has the disadvantage of not being an avenue of regular engagement as a gospel presence.

COFFEE GROUPS

WHY?

Coffee groups, as all the structures of church life, fall under the call of Jesus to be a people who are committed to being disciples who are making disciples whom apply the gospel to every part of everyday life.

Growing disciples need a context to learn how to be fed through time in the Word alone and in community.

As a church family, Mercy Hill expresses our commitment to Jesus' mission through involvement in Sunday gatherings (Gather), Missional Community (Go), and in Coffee groups (Grow), all of which provide ample opportunities to steward the gifts and talents God has given us (Give).

A part of the larger life of a missional community, coffee groups provide an opportunity for individuals to . . .

- go deeper in the Word of the gospel,
- debrief from life on life, life in community and life on mission,
- and seek direction for next steps of growth.

Jesus ministered to the crowds, the 70, and the 12, but He also had the 3. Each group had a different dynamic. He taught the crowds. He mobilized the seventy. He trained the twelve. He confided in the three. Although not exactly parallel, it seems a wise and beneficial pattern for us to follow in the purpose of making disciples.

Coffee groups exist to give disciples an opportunity to learn how to . . .

DISCOVER THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD

HEAD

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. (2 Timothy 3:16 – 17)

NURTURE ONE ANOTHER'S HEARTS

HEART

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. (Hebrews 3:12 – 14)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (James 5:16)

ACT IN RESPONSE TO GOD'S SPIRIT

HANDS

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Romans 12:1 – 2)

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. (James 1:22)

When achieving these goals, coffee groups free the other aspects of missional community life to accomplish their unique purposes.

- o The **Sunday Gathering** is freed up for focus on exultation, proclamation, and participation without the pressure of having to accomplish comprehensive education.
- o The **Family Meal** is freed up for celebration, discussion, family and friends integration and seasonal mission adjustments without the pressure of having to care for everyone's soul as a continuous support group or Bible study.
- o The **Proactive Mission** of serving a particular people group is freed up to focus on others without the pressure of that being the only time to address how those among us are serving others.
- o The **Reactive Mission**, where we engage in everyday missional living, is freed up to live in dependence on the Spirit without the pressure to accomplish anything else.

SO WHY SHOULD YOU BE IN A COFFEE GROUP?

God has designed change to take place through His Word, His Spirit, and His people in the trials, triumphs, trivialities, and temptations of everyday life. Coffee groups provide an opportunity to discover Jesus through His Word, and listen to the Spirit together with those whom we are living in life-on-life, life in community and life on mission. Without this context to go deeper in the Word, be held accountable at the level of the heart, and be challenged to obey and pray for others we are putting ourselves at a great disadvantage in growing as disciples and making other disciples.

“I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.”

John 17:15-19 (ESV)

PROCESS

SNAPSHOT

HEAD (DISCOVER)

1. What are the main points?
2. Who is God?
3. What has God done through Jesus?
4. Who are we?
5. What are we to do? How would I be different if this truth were explosively alive in my heart?
6. Why is the Spirit revealing this particular truth about Jesus today?

HEART (NURTURE)

1. How was your heart called to repent by what you discovered?
 - How have you been ignorant of or forgotten what you discovered?
 - How do you struggle or fail to believe what you discovered?
 - How do you rebel against what you discovered?
2. How is the Spirit leading us to speak the gospel to each other now?

HANDS (ACTION)

1. What is the Spirit leading you to do in light of what he showed you?
(specific obedience)
2. Is there anyway we can help each other live out the Spirit's call to change this week? As family, missionaries, or servants?
3. Whom is the Spirit leading you to show and tell this to this week – believer and/ or unbeliever?
4. Take turns praying for one another and for unbelieving friends.

HEAD

DISCOVER

Work through a section of the Bible (study guide, book, etc.) according to the plan you have decided on as a coffee group, answering the 6 questions listed below this paragraph.

It is helpful to have your group work through these questions prior to the meeting and pray each day in light of what they've read and learned. A key goal of Coffee groups is helping one another create a regular rhythm in their life of meeting God in His Word. You could divide the following 6 questions into the 6 days of the week prior to your meeting, and have each person write down their responses in a journal, or the margin of their Bible (study guide, book).

6 KEY QUESTIONS

1. What is the main point of this section?
2. Who is God in this section?
3. What had God done through Jesus in regard to this section?
4. Who are we in light of that?
5. What are to do in light of who we are in Jesus? How would I be different if this truth were explosively alive in my heart?
6. Why is the Spirit revealing this particular truth about Jesus today?

Example: Romans 6

1. We are set free from the power of sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus.
2. God is the one who sets free slaves to sin. Liberator.
3. Jesus died to pay the penalty of our sin and rose to break the power of sin.
4. I am free from the power of sin.
5. I am not to listen to the lie that I have to do what sin tells to do. I am to believe the truth that I am free and live out that freedom in obedience through faith. If I were to really believe this I would have confidence in the face of temptation and not feel like a helpless victim.
6. I have really been blowing up in anger at my family this week, and have excused by thinking "that's just the way I am" due to the temper in my family growing up. I think the Spirit wants to show me that I am imprisoned to my former identity but have been set free. I need to fight to be who I really am, and I need you guys to help me.

COFFEE GROUPS

HEART

NURTURE

Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will repent and believe in the gospel. The goal is to address the heart so that each person is brought to repentance and renewed faith every time a Coffee group meets.

ASK: Where do you need to repent and believe in light of what the Spirit is revealing this week?

Follow the Spirit, but seek some rotation where everyone can be addressed on a regular basis.

- How was your heart exposed by what you discovered?
- Is there some call of God you've been ignorant of or forgotten?
- How do you struggle or fail to believe what you discovered?
- How do you rebel against what you discovered?

ASK: How is the Spirit leading us to speak the gospel to each other now?

These questions may help talking through a situation. (See Resources for more)

- What is an example of what your sin and/or suffering looked like this week, or in your life in general?
- What were you believing about who you are in that situation? (needs, expectations, desires)
- What were you believing about what God has done in Jesus?
- What were you believing about who God is in that moment?
- What is the truth about who God is in that situation?
- What is the truth about what Jesus has done in that situation?
- What is the truth about who you are in that situation?
- What would following Jesus look like that situation?

COFFEE GROUPS

HANDS

ACT

Led by the Holy Spirit, the group will listen and obey as he calls us to bear fruit in keeping with repentance. The goal is to empower the hands so that, in light of their repentance, each person knows what to do and who to tell every time the group meets.

ASK...

- What is the Spirit leading you to do in light of what he showed you?
- Is there anyway we can help each other live out the Spirit's call to change this week? As family, missionaries, or servants?
- Whom is the Spirit leading you to show and tell this to this week – believer and/ or unbeliever?

PRAY...

- Pray for each other in view of the needs of heart change that have been exposed.
- Pray for your unbelieving friends, asking for open doors to connect and serve, open hearts to receive the gospel, and an open mouth to speak the gospel.

Write down the names of all whom the Spirit is sending you to and pray for their salvation. Here are some examples of how you can pray for them.

1. Lord, I pray that you draw ___ to Yourself (John 6:44).
2. I pray that ___ hears and believes the gospel as God's Word, not man's word (1 Thess 2:13).
3. I pray that ___ seeks to know You (Acts 17:27).
4. I ask You Father, to prevent the enemy from blinding __ to the truth (2 Cor 4:4, 2 Tim 2:25–26).
5. Holy Spirit, would You convict ___ of his/her rebellion and need for Jesus' rescue and restoration (John 16:7–14).
6. Jesus, use me and my MC to demonstrate, display and declare the gospel to ___ so that he/she sees, hears and experiences your gospel (Matt 9:37–38).
7. Father, give us opportunities and bold courage to share the good news with ___ (Col 4:3–6).
8. Jesus, I pray that ___ would put all of his/her trust fully in You (John 1:12, 5:24).
9. Jesus, I pray that ___ would obey You by repenting (turning from himself/herself as god to You), believe the gospel (that You did it all), and follow You (live for your mission, not his/hers) (Mk 1).
10. Pray for any specific opportunities to display and declare the gospel to __ this week.

COFFEE GROUPS

GETTING STARTED

FORMATION

As an individual or MC leader don't just form your groups randomly.

BEFORE YOU START....

- Pray about whom God would have you commit with in this type of gospel- driven, word-studying, heart-focused, obedience-acting relationship.
- Make sure your schedules and life situations align enough to allow for a commitment to meeting together regularly.
- Make sure that each person understands the purpose and process of a Coffee group, and the expectations involved.
- Make sure that there is at least one person in each Coffee group who will keep the group on track.

BEFORE YOU LAUNCH OR RE-LAUNCH AS AN MC LEADER...

- Devote a family meal discussion to understanding Coffee groups.
- Encourage involvement as a part of our "Grow" covenant commitment for members or as a pathway into discipleship or community belonging for new people.
- Ask everyone to share their ideal time for meeting as a Coffee group with the group as a whole so groups can form that can realistically meet together regularly.
- Don't expect everyone's schedule and life situation to make this easy or even possible in the same format for everyone in some cases.
- Commit to lead by example.
- Resolve to promote Coffee groups regularly and celebrate CG Wins.

FOUNDATION

GOSPEL STORIES

Take the first weeks to listen to God's story and one another's. These first four weeks will be unique in that you will not follow the full DNA process, but will help to understand each other so that you can better "use" that process in weeks to come.

WEEK 1: GIVE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STORY OF GOD AND ASK EACH PERSON TO PUT IT IN THEIR OWN WORDS.

- Use Resource: The Story of God Summary
- Practice Using the 6 Discover Questions with The Story

WEEK 2: WORK THROUGH LEARNING HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY WITH JESUS AS THE HERO.

- Use Resource: Telling Your Story With Jesus as the Hero
- Consider practicing with one of your stories
- Set homework to be able to tell your story in 10 – 15 min at next 1-2 meetings.

WEEK 3-4: TELL YOUR STORIES AND FOLLOW UP EACH PERSON'S STORY BY ASKING QUESTIONS BASED ON CREATION, FALL REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION.

GOSPEL FOUNDATION

Use a Gospel-Centered resource or set of Scripture texts to lay a foundation for reading and applying Scripture together. (Weeks 5 and following)

OPTION 1: GOSPEL DNA GUIDE

<http://storage.cloversites.com/communitas1/documents/gospel-dna-participants-guide.pdf>

Some groups may be able to use the guide as is, but some will feel more comfortable using it as a complementary resource. For the latter here are a list of Scriptures that somewhat correspond to the topics in the guide to use for the DNA process. Read the week's lesson in the guide along with answering your 6 questions of the text prior to meeting.)

1. Stories: Philippians 3:4 – 11
2. Gospel: Luke 15:11 – 32
3. Praying for Change: Matthew 6:6 – 15
4. Heart and Motivation: Jeremiah 17:5 – 10; Luke 6:43 – 45
5. Identity: Galatians 4:1 – 7
6. Rules: Colossians 2
7. Freedom: Romans 6:1 – 14
8. Worship and the Heart: James 4:1 – 12; (Mk 7:14 – 23)
9. God is Great and Glorious: Psalm 27/Romans 8:28
10. Good is Good and Gracious: Psalm 34/2 Corinthians 5:21
11. Idolatry: Colossians 3:1 – 17
12. Repentance and Faith: Psalm 51
13. Gospel Challenge: Luke 14:25 – 33
14. Pride: Philippians 2:1 – 11
15. Gospel-Centered: Galatians 2:15 – 21
16. Means of Grace: Acts 2:38 – 47
17. Changing Together: Ephesians 4:17 – 32
18. Lifetime and Mission: Matthew 28:16 – 20

OPTION 2: SELECT BIBLE READINGS (ROMANS 1 - 8; GOSPEL OF

JOHN; EPHESIANS) OPTION 3: GOSPEL PRIMER

(CAESAR KALINOWSKI)

OPTION 4: GOSPEL CENTERED DISCIPLESHIP (JONATHAN DODSON)

WHATNEXT?

Choose any book or section of the Bible, or study and work through the Head, Heart, Hands process. (See Resources for a list of topic-based texts)

COFFEE GROUPS

LEADERSHIP

- There will need to be at least one person who is able to keep the Coffee group on track.
- At the same time, the process should be understood by all so that any person in the group could lead at any time.
- Each person in the group should get experience leading the group. So a rotation of leading should be established once everyone is comfortable with the DNA process.
- This experience of leading a small group will help develop one another as disciple making disciples, and may lead to healthy multiplication of the group when the time is right.

KEEPING A COFFEE GROUP ON TRACK

- Stay committed to the DNA process in each meeting when you are tempted to just share about your week. Remember this is not the only time you can talk with your Coffee group members, and as you stay the course with the DNA process you will find that you address your heart and your situation more effectively.
- Stay committed to arriving at the meeting prepared. You will get to the heart much more quickly if everyone shows up prepared to talk about what they have discovered in God's Word through the Spirit.
- Keep the heart the focus. Guard against letting your time turn into a Bible Study, venting session, or an exercise in behavior modification.
- Be consistent. Even if it takes weeks or months for everyone to get comfortable, don't give up before you've given it a few months of consistency.

- Be Spirit-Led. If you need to take longer than a week on a Scripture, topic, or book chapter go for it. If you need to take time to just shepherd a certain individual through a difficult time, follow the Spirit; just make sure you listen for the heart and share the good news of Jesus to each other. If you need to take a week to review and make sure everyone is on the same page, then do it. The structures given in this guide are to serve discipleship growth not to become a check-list of accomplishment.

KEEP ASKING YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

1. Are we learning how to discover the word of the gospel individually and in community? What is that looking like right now?
2. Are we growing in diagnosing our sin and nurturing our hearts with the gospel individually and in community?
3. Are we faithfully praying for our hearts, one another and our friends far from God individually and in community?
4. Are we weekly walking together through the Head, Heart, Hands (DNA) process?

HEAD (DISCOVER)

What did we discover this week in the word via gospel lens?

HEART (NURTURE)

How do we need to repent at level of the heart this week in the gospel?

HANDS (ACT)

What will change look like practically this week and how can we pray for that? What will mission to specific people look like and how can we pray for them?

MULTIPLYING A COFFEE GROUP

- Disciples are called to make and multiply disciples. Coffee groups provide a great context for such multiplication.
- As members of a Coffee group become competent in leading the process they need to begin praying about what it would be like for them to begin a new Coffee group with others who are not yet involved.
- Multiplication should take place out of health and a sense of calling and not simply out of necessity due to the number of people not yet in a coffee group, even if they are desiring to be in one. It would be better to have a Coffee group that is too large or too small than to begin one where there was little chance of engaging effectively in the DNA process. If multiplication is going to be unhealthy then it has become division. There is no time limit for a Coffee group to multiply.
- Although it is best for Coffee groups to take place within participation in the same missional community, at times the health and the momentum of a coffee group should not be disrupted due to multiplication of the missional community as a whole.
- It is best to talk with your missional community leader about multiplication before you make any plans to multiply.

RE-LAUNCHING COFFEE GROUPS

- Sometimes your Coffee group just doesn't work out. After you've given it a try for 3-4 months you may have to face the reality of competing schedules and life seasons make regular meetings nearly impossible.
- You have not failed. Things change and life happens. You just need to talk to your mc leader and pray about how to regroup.
- If this happens, just return to the formation stage above, and trust in the control & wisdom of God in spite of whatever frustrations you have thus far.
- Sometimes an MC has an influx of new people that may lead to restructuring groups. Be wise and patient to structure for multiplication of disciples and not just more groups.

COFFEE GROUP DEFEATERS

- An attitude that believes: “I don’t have anything to offer this group”
- An attitude that believes: “These people don’t have anything to offer me”
- An attitude that believes: “I don’t have time.”
- Schedules that don’t align
- A member of the group who dominates the time
- Not listening, and especially not listening for the heart
- Not taking the DNA process seriously
- Not coming prepared
- Forcing the DNA process when the Spirit is leading you to slow-down
- Turning the Coffee group into a lecture by a leader
- Letting your personality make you privilege one part of the DNA process
- An unwillingness for anyone to provide leadership when you need to move forward
- Perfectionism and Inflexibility (you can plan on it being messy and needing change)
- A lack of commitment to the group
- Motivating with guilt instead of grace

PAYOFF

STRONGER MISSIONAL COMM.'S...

where the outward focus of serving and reaching others with gospel doesn't compete with the need for inward attention and accountability.

STRONGER CHURCH FAMILY ...

where every member is growing in their ability to do the work of gospel ministry in all areas of church-wide service.

STRONGER FAMILIES ...

where spouses and parents and children are getting better at speaking the gospel into one another's heart and hearing with humility.

STRONGER INDIVIDUALS ...

where people know how to feed themselves with the gospel of God's Word.

GOOD FOR THE CITY ...

where people are being shaped into everyday missionaries who can hear with gospel ears and speak with gospel words naturally.

GLORY TO GOD ...

where people are growing in heart satisfaction in God and experiencing the joy of knowing Him.