

Why Homegroups?

Relationships.

The number one reason people seek out small groups is relationships. If they do not find relationships in our home groups, they will look elsewhere. Studies show that during the first six weeks of the fall semester, students form the core relationships that will determine the direction and outcome of the entire year. Our goal is to reach students early on by providing an environment that encourages healthy relationships.

Doing versus just hearing the word.

It's very easy to sit and listen to a 30-minute talk once a week during a Sunday gathering. But God wants us to do more than just hear the Word. He wants us to live it. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." Doing the word simply happens best in community, where we are able to fulfill Christ's command to "love one another."

Community is God's design for humanity.

In addition to the "love one another" command of Jesus, the Bible is full of other instruction that can only be lived out in relationships, leading to the conclusion that his desire is for all people to share in community: "Be at peace with one another" (Mark 9:50); "Be devoted to one another" (Romans 12:10); "Honor one another" (Romans 12:10); "Accept one another" (Romans 15:7); "Have equal concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:25); "Consider others better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3). "Encourage one another daily" (Hebrews 3:13).

God has gifted each person to serve others.

We are Christ's hands and feet on the earth, gifted by him to serve one another. Again, this happens best in a loving community. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (1 Peter 4:10). No one is gifted in every way, but all of us are gifted in some way. God wants us using our gifts to serve the community. This can happen very naturally in a home group setting.

We are family.

Our age is full of broken families. The church is to offer a healing example of what a family can be. The Bible says over and over again that we are children of God and brothers and sisters of each other. Home Groups are intended to be healthy families built on the foundation of eternal Truth.

A natural environment for living out our mission/vision.

NLCF exists to invest in spiritual growth, invite people to follow Jesus, and inspire each other to change the world. Home groups are helpful in fulfilling this purpose.

A place where people meet God.

Philip Yancey writes, "Church exists primarily not to provide entertainment or to encourage vulnerability or to build self-esteem or to facilitate friendships but to worship God; if it fails in that, it fails" (*Church: Why Bother?*). Our home groups are a place where people can come and meet with the God who gives value and purpose to our lives.

Offering the world glimpses of heaven.

"Christians are not meant just to try to good, be nice and help the world work a little bit better. They are instead to act as signposts to another order, another way of life, another kingdom, which can be glimpsed in this world, but has not yet arrived completely...those who believe in God's kingdom and kingship will want to act as signs of that kingdom, offering reminders, aromas, tastes of what it might mean to live under God's rule, not the iron law of sin and death."

- Graham Tomlin, *The Provocative Church*