

# **Small Group Vision 2020**

**7-10-20**

**By: Joel R. Greenwood**

## **1. What does this mean for the adult Wednesday Small Groups?**

There are currently four adult classes that meet on Wednesday evening. Pastor Norm's group, which no longer meets as of July 1<sup>st</sup>. So that leaves three groups. Family Life (avg. attendance 25), Men's Bible Study (avg. attendance 8) and Women's Bible Study (avg. attendance 16). Most of the individuals who attend these groups are also plugged into another group at the church. Many who attend these groups would make amazing Small Group Leaders. If the Men's Bible Study or the Women's Bible Study would like to continue meeting on Wednesday evenings, they are welcome to do so. Obviously, my class (Family Life) will no longer meet since I will be leading the service in the sanctuary. Although this is sad, I will be encouraging those in my class to join a small group or create a new small group if they aren't already in one. This leads to the second way we plan to address our desire for greater numerical and spiritual growth. We want to push the importance of Small groups starting in the fall of 2020. These will be called "Life Groups".

## **2. How will Fairview get adults plugged into Life Groups?**

That is a great question. I believe small groups are the backbone of the church. I believe small groups are the place where the deepest levels of discipleship and fellowship take place. I also know that "forced" small groups are awkward, uncomfortable, weird, strange and temporary. We have no intention to put people together based on age, stage of life or other demographics. So, what does work? We believe your current circle of friends is the best small group you could have. You already have a relationship. You already have trust. You, hopefully, already enjoy being with each other. Do you have two friends? Then you have a small group. What better excuse is there to see your friends on a weekly or bi-weekly basis than to say it is your small group. In the winter of 2021 we have the goal of launching 50 new small groups. These are groups of friends, that already exist in the church, but we want you to take that friendship to the next level. We want you to be intentional in your current friendships with spiritual growth and conversation. We want to resource you with some material that you and your friends can use to grow closer to God and closer together. We want you to commit to ten weeks together, with the goal of hopefully starting a new habit. If at the end of 10 weeks, it just isn't a good "fit" for you, it is a "free" out. There will be a push we do at least twice a year to start new small groups in the church. We will give you more details later, but we are pretty excited about this.

## **3. What if you don't have close friends already at Fairview? How will you find a group?**

I have to be honest; this is a great question without a great answer. Of course, it is possible that you attend Fairview, and have for quite some time, but don't have any people you would say are "close friends". Our goal is that everyone would be able to build these relationships and meet people at our various fellowship events we do on a yearly basis. If this hasn't happened for you, or you are new to the church, we are planning two yearly events where people who want to join a small group can connect. We hope to launch new small groups from this event. If after 10 weeks, it doesn't work, you have a "free" out and can try again.

We also will always have a sign-up sheet available every Sunday for those who are interested in starting or joining a small group. Some groups will be "open" and allow for others to join. We also plan on continually looking for "leaders" who will start new groups.

#### **4. When and where will these small groups meet?**

These small groups can meet anytime that is convenient for the group. We are not going to mandate a certain day of the week. It is our desire that these small groups would meet in the homes, but the church is open as well if the home just doesn't work. We would like the groups to meet weekly or bi-weekly. That is up to each group and their schedule.

#### **5. What if we have kids? How are we supposed to meet?**

There are two options to make your small group more successful if you have small children. Option one is that you could meet on Wednesday evenings. You could gather together for dinner or fellowship after work for a little bit. Then, bring your children to the church for Awana or youth group. You could either stay at the church and use a room or go back to someone's house. Then at 8 you could pick up your kids from Awana and youth group.

Option two is a little different. If Wednesday doesn't work for you, here is an idea. Do a three-week rotation. Week 1, the men get together and watch the children at someone's house while the women gather together at a different house. Week 2, the women gather together and watch the children at someone's house while the men gather together at a different house. Week 3, you hire a babysitter (the church will help with this financially if necessary) and meet all together as couples without the kids. Obviously when you have the children, your group discussion won't be as "deep", but it is only 1 out of every 3 meetings.

#### **6. What if I am already in a group (Small group or otherwise) and want to try this, but can't do both?**

It is always hard to try something new, but as long as you communicate with your current group that you want to try this and don't have time for both, that is okay. Just be loving. Remember to show grace and mercy to all involved.

## **7. How long is this commitment? Is there a timeframe on these new groups?**

This initial commitment will be 10 weeks, but please hear my heart. It is my desire that you would continue in this group for a long time. If your group proves to be “life-giving” we will continue to supply you with material to go through that your group would like. After the initial 10-weeks, each group will be able to choose what their next Bible study is. If your group just doesn’t mesh after 10 weeks, there is an “easy” out to start over. Please offer grace, mercy and love.

## **8. How do I get out of a group that I just don’t fit well in?**

There will be a 10-week trial at the beginning of all small groups. If after the 10 weeks, it just isn’t working the group can dismantle and try again with others. There needs to be freedom within these groups to “try again” while at the same time not just run when things get difficult for whatever reason. We will walk with you through this.

## **9. What if I am already in a fellowship group, they don’t want to do this and I don’t have time for both?**

You can stay in that group and continue to enjoy your fellowship. We love you and hope this fills you up. At the same time, we would say, it is our long-term goal that everyone would be in some type of small group and not just a fellowship group that meets once a month. Still, we are not going to dismantle any fellowship groups that already exist. Some of these groups have existed for many, many years.

## **10. What does a small group meeting look like?**

We will be explaining this in more detail between now and when these groups start. It includes both fellowship and discipleship. These groups should include a time of fellowship (Just hanging out) as well as discipleship (Some sort of study). The depth of discipleship will vary by group. The goal of these groups is to help people take their next step toward Jesus. We are all at different spots in our journey. These groups should also incorporate a time of prayer. The group will grow much closer together if they find a way to serve together once a quarter. The most effective groups will be the ones that fulfill all 5 purposes of the church: Discipleship, Fellowship, Evangelism, Service and Worship.

## **11. Will there be training/help for group leaders?**

Yes, we will be offering training, help and support for all group leaders. We will be available to answer any questions that come up in your group for which you don’t have answers. We will also walk with you through any difficult seasons your group experiences.

**12. Is now really the best time to try something new?**

I do believe now is the best time to try this. Change is never easy and is always scary. We don't know what the future holds, but I believe if we will make these two changes we will be better prepared for the future as a church and as individuals. We are waiting until the winter of 2021 so we can answer everyone's questions, market the ideas and make sure we have thought through this thoroughly. Please note, the time of the service you normally attended on Sunday will stay the same, but you will have a new option to attend on a Wednesday evening or to invite friends to if Sunday doesn't work.

**13. When will these new groups start?**

These new groups will start the week of January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Every group will initially go through the "Rooted" material for 10 weeks. These groups will have a celebration service the week of March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021. At that point the group may continue or choose to disband.

**14. Will these groups be open to new members joining or closed?**

The groups will be closed for the first 10 weeks. After that initial 10 weeks it will be up to every group as to whether they want to be open for new members or not. My guess is that most groups will want to remain closed because of the connections that have taken place.