

Bethel Baptist Church  
Community Bible Fellowship  
Participant's Guide

DEFINITIONS

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*What is a Community Bible Fellowship?*

A Community Bible Fellowship is a group of 8-12 members of Bethel led by a qualified leader engaged in regular interaction that is transparent, Word-centered, and focused on growth in godly love and godly living.

More specifically, a Community Bible Fellowship is –

Led by a man or woman (for ladies' groups) who exhibits the qualities of a faithful believer that is able to engage others in the discussion of Biblical truth based on the implementation and demonstration of truth in their lives.

Composed of a small group of believers as part of the assembly at Bethel that engage in a transparent, spiritual relationship with each other.

Focused on practically exploring ways in which the truth of God's Word applies to daily living in a setting that provides mutual care through accountability, encouragement, exhortation, and confrontation when needed.

Designed for believers to help each other take the steps of spiritual transformation that are needed at this time in their lives.

A  
COMMUNITY  
BIBLE  
FELLOWSHIP  
IS  
SPIRITUAL  
FELLOWSHIP  
THAT  
CHALLENGES  
YOU TO GROW.

Community Bible Fellowships will meet at a group-determined, regularly scheduled time that does not conflict with our Sunday meeting times.

Groups are encouraged to meet in homes of the group members.

## PURPOSE AND VALUES

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### *What are we seeking to accomplish through each Community Bible Fellowship?*

The purpose of each Community Bible Fellowship is to inspire each other to greater love and godly living as followers of Jesus Christ.

### *What are the priorities for our body life within each Community Bible Fellowship?*

The spiritual interaction that will occur through Community Bible Fellowships are guided by five core values:

- *Authority:* Relying on God's Word as the source of our instruction.
- *Growth:* Applying God's truth to daily life for our spiritual transformation.
- *Care:* Expressing love, concern and support to one another with words and actions.
- *Accountability:* Submitting to one another for exhortation, rebuke and encouragement.
- *Transparency:* Being honest and teachable in our relationship with each other.

### *Our Mandate*

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

## MEMBER COVENANT

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*What expectations should you have for each other as members of a Community Bible Fellowship?*

Body life within a Community Bible Fellowship requires commitment to each other in the form of a member covenant.

### Community Bible Fellowship Member Covenant

**OUR PURPOSE IS :**

To inspire each other to greater love and godly living as followers of Jesus Christ.

**OUR VALUES ARE :**

*Authority* – Relying on God’s Word as the source of our instruction.

*Growth* – Applying God’s truth to daily life for our spiritual transformation.

*Care* – Expressing love, concern and support to one another with words and actions.

*Accountability* – Submitting to one another for exhortation, rebuke and encouragement.

*Transparency* – Being honest and teachable in our relationship with each other.

**OUR COMMITMENT TO EACH OTHER IS :**

*Priority* – We will make our Community Bible Fellowship meeting a priority and will call ahead when we are unable to attend.

*Preparation* – We will come to the Community Bible Fellowship on time, prepared and ready to participate.

*Confidentiality* – We will maintain confidentiality of the personal information shared during the Community Bible Fellowship.

*Prayer* – We commit to pray regularly for the other members of the Community Bible Fellowship and leaders of Bethel Baptist Church.

*Respect* – We will participate without dominating or disrupting the time and attention of the group.

I agree to all of the above: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## LEADERSHIP

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### *How are leaders for Community Bible Fellowships selected?*

Leadership for the Community Bible Fellowships will be selected based on the recommendation of the pastors for both group leaders and apprentice leaders. The pastors will also solicit input from group leaders.

Men recommended for group leadership must demonstrate the qualities of faithfulness and should have or be growing in the qualities of leadership stated in I Timothy 3.

Women recommended for leadership of women's specific groups must demonstrate the qualities of a godly woman expressed in Scripture, such as Titus 2:3-5.

*I Timothy 2:2  
And what you have  
heard from me in the  
presence of many  
witnesses entrust to  
faithful men who will  
be able to teach others  
also.*

### *What other qualities are essential for successful group leadership?*

In addition, the following spiritual leadership qualities should be demonstrated in the life and ministry of those who serve as group leaders:

COMMITTED

*Committed* – They must be committed to Christ, the authority of God's Word, the doctrinal statement and philosophy of ministry of Bethel, and the vision for Biblical community at Bethel.

CONSISTENT

*Consistent* – They must be growing in their personal relationships with Jesus Christ and consistently practice the spiritual disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, and accountable relationships.

*Submitted*

**Able to Lead**

*Submitted* – They must be submitted and accountable to the pastoral leadership of Bethel and other authorities in their lives.

*Loving*

Commendable Marriage

*Able to Lead* – They must have the self-control and discernment necessary to steer discussion in a profitable direction. They must have the courage to show group members their faults and the wisdom to know when to do so.

**TRAINED**

*Loving* – They must have a growing love toward the people for whom they care.

*Commendable Marriage* – A man must be a leader at home, leading his own wife in the ways of God's wisdom and loving her as Christ loved the church. His wife should support him by using her spiritual gifts to promote spiritual growth, care, and fellowship in the group and exhibit similar character qualities of her husband.

A woman must be recognized as one who is submissive to her own husband. Her husband should be an example of a faithful man who provides spiritual leadership in the home.

*Trained* – They must have successfully completed the training program and participate in the coaching process for group leaders.

### *What equipping is provided to those identified as Community Bible Fellowship leaders?*

Group leaders participate in leadership training that is both a prerequisite to leading and an ongoing part of their roles as leaders. Spouses of group leaders are also encouraged to participate in the leader training.

### *How will pastors oversee the Community Bible Fellowships?*

Members of the pastoral staff will coach their assigned group leaders and be directed by the Community Bible Fellowship point leader under the direction of the senior pastor. Pastoral coaching will provide the group sufficient oversight to:

- Ensure that the purpose and values Community Bible Fellowships are consistently pursued within each group.
- Provide ongoing and new leader development.
- Monitor the level and consistency of group participation.
- Recommend groups for new members to join.
- Facilitate new group formation as growth occurs.



## FORMATION

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### *How are Community Bible Fellowship groups formed?*

Community Bible Fellowship groups are composed of 8-12 adult members of Bethel and not based on a particular affinity group. Since other adult ministries of Bethel enable affinity among age groups, Community Bible Fellowships encourage multi-generational spiritual interaction. All ages of post-high school adults are regularly challenged to participate in a Community Bible Fellowship.

The initial pathway to group life is based on an expression of interest by members of Bethel to be involved in a Community Bible Fellowship. Based on the expression of interest from Bethel members, the pastoral coaches will assist group leaders to recruit and add members to their group.



As new members join Bethel, Community Bible Fellowships are introduced through the new and prospective members class. The pastoral coaches will provide recommendations as to the appropriate groups for the new members to consider joining. Size, geography, demographics, and effectiveness of a group will be among the criteria used in such recommendations.

As growth dictates, new groups are birthed out of existing groups with apprentice leaders assuming leadership of an existing group or starting a new group.

### *How long will each Community Bible Fellowship last?*

The normal life cycle for a Community Bible Fellowship is 18-30 months. As a group reaches the end of its life cycle, the pastoral coaches work with the group leaders to form new groups. The goal is to add additional Community Bible Fellowships by forming new groups from existing and new members of Bethel. Apprentice leaders from existing groups are evaluated as potential leaders for new groups.

## MEETINGS

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### *How does the meeting schedule for the group get established?*

The group leader will coordinate the regular day and time of the group meeting. Group meetings must be set on a schedule that allows consistent participation of all group members. With the variation of individual schedules, flexibility is encouraged where necessary to enable member participation.

Groups will meet at least 2 times per month at a time that doesn't conflict with Bethel's Sunday meeting times. The suggested meeting location is in the homes of the members of the group, either at the same home or at rotating homes as decided by the members of the group.

The group leader ensures that each Community Bible Fellowship meeting is effective and on track to accomplish its purpose of Biblical community.

### *What is the format for each meeting?*

The agenda for each Community Bible Fellowship meeting is as follows:

GATHER

Study

Pray

Relate

- Gathering – to connect with each other – 20 minutes
  - Catching up & Snack/Coffee (optional)
  - Opening prayer
- Study – to understand the Word and how it applies to me – 45-60 minutes
  - Application focus Bible or book study
  - Discussion-based learning
- Prayer – to apply God's truth to specific issues in my life – 30 minutes
  - Men with men, women with women to promote transparency
  - Specific action plans for accountability and encouragement
  - Prayer
- Interact – to build meaningful relationships – 20 minutes
  - Informal fellowship and wrap up
  - Continued mutual care

*What study curriculum will be used in the group meetings?*

The curriculum for the Community Bible Fellowship will be discussed within the group and selected from materials identified by the pastoral staff or the group leader.

Group leaders interact with their pastoral coaches in determining the curriculum that will be most beneficial and timely for their group. All new groups use a starting curriculum that assists their beginning of a Community Bible Fellowship.

*How is childcare handled for group meetings?*

Given the differing needs for childcare in each group, the group leader will work with the group members to a workable solution to ensure that children are cared for in a manner that enables the adults to have uninterrupted meeting time. Pastoral coaches will assist the group leaders in identifying potential solutions to childcare.

**Bethel Baptist Church exists to make and mature disciples  
of Jesus Christ for the glory of God**

