



## **Connect Groups**

### **Host Handbook**

For more information or personal assistance in starting or becoming part of a Connect Group, contact Christi Ambuehl, Director of Community Groups, at [TriciaS@perimeter.org](mailto:TriciaS@perimeter.org) or 678-405-2297.

### **Purpose, Vision & Mission**

#### **Our Purpose** *(Why do we exist?)*

To glorify God and to enjoy Him, in and through meaningful relationships with one another

#### **Our Vision** *(What are we trying to accomplish?)*

To strengthen the relational fabric of Perimeter Church among individuals and families, such that each person has a sense of belonging and feeling of being known and knowing others.

To empower our hosts, and through them, Connect Group members, to greet, befriend and invite their unchurched friends and neighbors into Biblical community through the avenue of their Connect Group.

#### **Our Mission** *(How do we seek to accomplish our vision?)*

We seek to strengthen the relational fabric of Perimeter Church by:

1. Helping members and regular attenders meet and connect with others who live in close geographic proximity, are a similar age/stage and/or share common interests.
2. Identifying individuals / couples who are willing to host a Connect Group.
3. Envisioning, equipping, and encouraging hosts as they seek to gather, care for, and build relationships among their group.

## Overview of Community Groups in the Larger Perimeter Ministry Plan

At its essence, Church is all about community, and we know that sometimes, in a big church, it can be challenging to find that place of community. The purpose of Community Groups is to give church members and regular attenders (on campus and off campus) opportunities to connect and build relationships.

**Connect Groups** meet once or twice per month. They are fun, relationship focused groups that gather **off-campus**, according to geographic proximity and life stage. Connect Groups are for Perimeter newcomers and long-timers, as well as friends and neighbors, to gain a greater experience of connectedness and a sense of belonging. Gatherings usually involve food, a fun topic of conversation that helps people get to know one another, or an activity.

**Sunday Morning Communities** meet weekly at the **church facilities** for the purpose of assimilating new people into the church family, establishing social relationships with others, and experiencing biblical equipping. The groups vary in programming, content and composition (often by age and stage of life).

## What Makes a Good Host?

**H** – Heart for people

**O** – Offer hospitality

**S** – Share a meal or activity

**T** – Tune in to one another

Tips to starting a successful group:

1. Focus on your neighborhood: we will more naturally fall into community with the people who we see more regularly. We will see those more regularly who live close to us and we have natural connections with.
2. Set your next meeting time in advance: either before your current meeting or during it. This makes it simple to invite new folks in (because there is always something on the calendar) and keeps your group rolling, even in busy seasons.
3. Have your own mini-ministry plan for your Connect Group. We delight in the diversity of our groups. Using this loose outline, build your group out in a way that reflects your heartbeat and passions.

## **Examples of Current Connect Group Ministry Plans/Descriptions:**

### **Young Adults Connect Group**

Our Vision:

To provide a point of first exposure for prospective attendees to Perimeter Church in getting plugged into the life and community of the church. To provide those not grounded into relationships with other Christians a safe environment to create deeper friendships and discuss life and spiritual issues with others.

Target: 25-30 yr olds

Name: Perimeter Church Young Adults Connect Group

Priorities:

Focus on bringing in those who are new & are not connected at Perimeter Church

(Friends Hangout vs. Missional Focus)

Encourage regular attendees in developing deeper relationships with other Christians.

Avenues for Feedback

Outward Focus - inviting others

To Reproduce - to start looking to have younger leadership to get involved, as a natural replacement

### **Doublegate Connect Group**

About Our Connect Group

Our group was created as part of Perimeter Church's Connect Group initiative that officially began with a kick-off in February 2014. We believe that people matter and relationships matter. It's important that the people relationally connect. It's also important that our friends and neighbors have a safe, comfortable environment, where they develop relationships with each other. Our Doublegate Connect Group is envisioned to be a gathering of families with young children, who live in or near Doublegate subdivision, formed to build relationships, sense of close community, and just go through life together.

We envision our gatherings will be at parks, in homes, or at outdoor events, and could be anything from sharing a meal together in a home, enjoying an outdoor concert, watching a sporting event on television, or participating in an outdoor adventure together.

We're up for just about anything, but want our gatherings to serve our primary purpose of developing relationships. We want our gatherings to be comfortable environments to invite friends and neighbors.

## About Relationships

Relationships are funny. They don't just happen because you get put in a group of people that live in the same neighborhood, you're in the same age and stage of life, or have the same interests and things in common (although those things help). Think about your closest friends. Now, think about how you met them and became close friends. How did that happen? Chances are, you grew up with some, went to college with others, worked with some, lived in a same neighborhood, or had kids that played on the same team. Often times, there seems to be no rhyme or reason as to how our friendships and closest relationships develop into what they are. The most common predictors of relationships include: similar personality styles, common interests, common experiences, and common geography.

In the book *"The Search to Belong – Rethinking Intimacy, Community, and Small Groups"*, author Joseph Myers identified four different spaces of relationships: Public, Social, Personal, and Intimate. Generally speaking, Community Groups will fit mostly into the "Social Space" with some relationships developing deeper and going into the Personal and Intimate Spaces. The four relational spaces defined are:

1. Public – usually a large group of people that you share a common interest or experience (i.e. fans cheering with you for the same team at a sports event, worshippers in church, people waiting your turn at the DMV, etc.)
2. Social – these are people that you may interact with on a daily or weekly basis, whom you feel comfortable around, and whom you may like, but that you wouldn't necessarily count them as close friends. Examples: neighbors (i.e. people that you feel comfortable lending or borrowing tools from but who you may not necessarily hang out with), regular customers, bank teller, dry cleaner, etc. Social space is important because it provides a safe selection space to meet people and decide who you'd like to develop a deeper relationship with.
3. Personal – these are the people whom you would consider "close friends." These are people with whom you share private experiences, thoughts, and feelings. These are people with whom you've been emotionally vulnerable and transparent, but not emotionally naked. They know you, but they don't know everything that there is to know about you.
4. Intimate – these are the very few people in your life who know you "warts and all" (i.e. spouse, sibling, best friend, etc.). These people know you deeply and accept you for who you are.

Our lives are most healthy when we have people in each of these spaces. Each Connect Group will have its own unique look and feel with its own set of friendships and relationships, varying from Public to Social to Personal to Intimate spaces. Every group will be different and every mix of relationships will be different. It's often common (in churches, especially) when we become a part of a new group, we expect that we'll develop Personal and/or Intimate relationships with everyone in the group, and when that doesn't happen, we're disappointed. Take the pressure off. The best way to look at Connect Groups (or any other relational groups, for that matter) is as opportunities to meet new people and develop new relationships that may be at a Public / Social level or may also move deeper to a Personal / Intimate level. Either way, it's all good!

## Conversation Starter Questions

Below are a few categories of questions that can be beneficial in helping your group interact and get to know each other better.

### Getting to Know Each Other:

- How long have you been at Perimeter?
- How did you find Perimeter?
- How long have you lived in Atlanta? Where are you from originally?

### Favorites

1. Cereal
2. TV Show
3. Food / Restaurant
4. Book / Movie
5. Band / Concert
6. Hobby / Activity
7. Sports Team
8. Vacation location
9. Church / Preacher (other than Perimeter)
10. Bible Story / Verse

### Pick One

- |                      |                     |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Chinese           | Italian             | Mexican             |
| 2. Coke              | Pepsi               | Generic             |
| 3. Snow Skiing       | Water Skiing        | Sky Diving          |
| 4. Nike              | New Balance         | Other: _____        |
| 5. Walking / Jogging | Biking / Elliptical | Swimming            |
| 6. Books             | Movies              | Theatre / Arts      |
| 7. Classical / Jazz  | Country / Rock      | Christian / Worship |
| 8. Target            | Walmart             | Kmart               |
| 9. Publix            | Kroger              | Walmart             |
| 10. Sanctuary        | Chapel              | Hanger              |

### Pick Three. The rest you must give up forever.

Coffee  
Toothbrush  
Coke / Diet Coke  
Comfortable shoes  
Razor Blade  
ESPN / HGTV  
Hot water

Ice

### **Show & Tell**

Have each person in the group bring an item (it can be anything), describe what it is, and share why it is significant to you.

### **Family**

1. Where were you born? Where did you grow up?
2. What did your father do for a living? What did your mom do?
3. Did you grow up with siblings? Where are you in the birth order?
4. What memories / stories of childhood stand out in your mind?
5. What role did faith and church play in your growing up family?
6. If married, how and where did you meet your spouse?
7. Do you have a good engagement story that you'd like to share?
8. If you have children, what are their ages and names?
9. How did you determine the names of your children?
10. Who, in your family, are you closest to, relationally?

### **Work, Career, and Calling**

1. What is the first job you ever had?
2. What is the worst job you've ever had?
3. What is the best job you've ever had?
4. Do you gravitate towards working with your hands (i.e. handyman, artistic, mechanical, etc.), with people, in arts and music, in education and higher learning, or with concepts and ideas?
5. What is a career related accomplishment that you are most proud of?
6. When you were a child, what did you want to do when you grew up?
7. How did you end up in the career path you're currently in?
8. Have you had any major career changes along the way? How did that happen?
9. Do you feel like your career and calling are in alignment with one another?
10. As relates to calling, what do you think God has created you to do? What gives you the greatest sense of pleasure and contentment, as relates to career and/or calling?

### **Going Deeper**

1. What past life experience has had the greatest impact on who you are today?
2. What person has had the greatest impact on who you are today?
3. When and how did you first experience God in a life changing kind of way?
4. What life experience(s) have you had that God has / could use the most to help other people?
5. What has been the biggest life transition you've experienced (i.e. job change, location change, single to married, married to children, death of loved one, etc.)?

6. What is a joyful moment in life that sticks out as being one of your greatest memories?
7. What was the greatest impact that your father / mother / grandparent had on you the most?
8. What impact / legacy do you hope to leave with your children / grandchildren?
9. What are some tangible ways that coming to an understanding of the gospel changed your life?
10. What person(s) do you credit with the most in your coming to faith and/or growing in faith?

### **Christian Living**

1. When do you think you really became a Christian? How did that happen?
2. What is your ministry "sweet spot?" a. Mercy & Compassion b. Hospitality & Welcoming  
c. Care & Prayer d. Mission & Evangelism
3. What aspects of God's character (i.e. love, grace, holiness, justice, acceptance, etc.) do you gravitate to the most (when thinking of God)? Who has Jesus been to you this week?
4. What Christian book, study, or resource has had the greatest impact on your spiritual life?
5. If a Christian friend of yours was having a hard time feeling close and connected to God, what counsel would you give them?
6. What are your spiritual gifts?
7. How do you try to go about sharing your faith? Have you experienced fruitfulness?
8. What is your favorite way / place to serve within the church / in the community?
9. How many of your day to day relationships are with non-Christians? How do you go about developing non-Christian friendships?
10. What causes you the most frustration in your Christian life?

### **Sermon DeBrief:**

1. How would you summarize this past weekend's sermon message?
2. What jumped out at you the most?
3. What challenged you the most?
4. What was a take away / point of application?
5. How did you experience the gospel in the sermon (and/or the worship service, in general)?