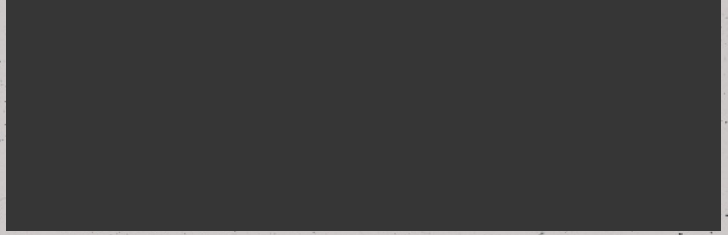


3 WEEKS

commit



© Copyright 2023. Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 1973 1978 1984 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, a Division of Tyndale House Ministries, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Gatien GREGORI/MNSstudio/Shutterstock

# table of contents



## week 1

Commitment Phobia ..... 4



## week 2

Friends with Benefits..... 6



## week 3

Wholehearted Commitment..... 8

**Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group.....10**

**Group Agreement .....11**



# commitment phobia

week 1

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

What sometimes keeps you from making big commitments?

### Big Idea:

There is nobility in commitment making, commitment honoring, and commitment keeping.

### Key Scriptures:

John 8:31-34

*"To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?" Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin."*

1 Kings 19:19-21

*"So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant."*

Matthew 16:24

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

## Discussion:

1. How do you define commitment? How do you define freedom? In what ways can freedom be seen as the opposite of commitment?
2. In what ways do you observe commitment actually bringing freedom?
3. *Read John 8:31-34.* What does Jesus say will make us free?
4. How does this free us from slavery to sin?
5. In light of these verses, reflect on this observation: "Commitment makers can experience a kind of freedom that commitment avoiders will never know."
6. *Read 1 Kings 19:19-21.* What was Elijah's purpose for wrapping Elisha in his cloak?
7. Why did Elisha kill and sacrifice his oxen and burn his plow?
8. How did this show his commitment to God's call through Elijah?
9. *Read Matthew 16:24.* People who follow Jesus are commitment makers. The reason we are drawn to make commitments is that we alone of all the creatures God created are made in the image of a commitment

-making, commitment-keeping God. Discuss the types of commitments God makes and keeps.

## Wrapping It Up:

You are writing the story of your life with the commitments you make and keep. What does your story look like?

## Prayer Focus:

Pray for the launch of JOY (just older youth) Ministry taking place this week. And for many to find community and purpose through the ministry.

## Memory Verse:

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."*

**Matthew 16:24**







# friends with benefits

week 2

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Who has been a faithful friend to you (whether for a period of time or several years)? Share with your group how that friendship began.

### Big Idea:

God's desire was is for man to not be alone- we need committed relationships in our life, marriage, and friendships.

### Key Scriptures:

John 15:12-15

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that*

*I learned from my Father I have made known to you."*

Matthew 26:47-50

*"While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend." Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him."*

1 John 4:19

*"We love because he first loved us."*

Proverbs 18:24

*"One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."*

## Discussion:

1. Read *John 15:12-15*, *Matthew 26:47-50* and *1 John 4:19*. Describe the relationship between Jesus and His disciples.
2. What are the implications of those relationships for those who are followers of Jesus today?
3. Read *Proverbs 18:24*. How have you experienced this proverb in your life?
4. How have you demonstrated this proverb in your life?
5. How have long-lasting committed relationships (whether family, marriage or friendships) had a positive impact on you?
6. Share a time when you had difficulty making a commitment to someone and why it was hard.
7. Describe a situation where you broke a commitment with someone and what that experience taught you.

## Wrapping It Up:

Identify a broken or difficult relationship in your life that is

simply waiting for someone to commit to take the first step toward reconciliation. Ask your group to pray with you to take that first step.

## Prayer Focus:

Pray for healed marriages and reconciled relationships within the body of Christ at Sunnybrook.

## Memory Verse:

*"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."* John 15:12-15



commit

# wholehearted commitment

week 3

## SMALL GROUP STUDY

### Kicking it off:

Describe a commitment you found hard to make (or are having a hard time making).

### Big Idea:

Following Jesus takes wholehearted commitment.

### Key Scriptures:

Genesis 15:7-10, 12, 17-18

*"He also said to him, "I am the Lord, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it." But Abram said, "Sovereign Lord, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?" So the Lord said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon." Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite*

*each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half... As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him... When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land..."*

Exodus 24:7-8

*"Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey." Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words."*

Mark 14:23-24

*"Then he took a cup, and when*



*he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them."*

### **Discussion:**

1. Read Genesis 15:7-10, 12; 17-18. Why do you think Abram asked how he would know God would fulfill his promise?
2. What was God's response and why?
3. Based on the message and what you read in these verse, what does it mean to cut a covenant? What is the significance of the animals?
4. Read Exodus 24:7-8 and Mark 14:23-24. What could blood signify in the ceremony in the Exodus verses? What is the significance of the cup that Jesus describes in the Mark passages?
5. What is the difference between a covenant and a contract? Which better describes your relationship with God at this time?
6. In what area of your life do you have the most difficulty trusting God (finances, time, relationships, sexuality, heart, etc.)?
7. In what specific area of your

life might you need to renew your covenant with God?

### **Wrapping It Up:**

Pray for each person in the area where they would like to renew their covenant with God.

### **Prayer Focus:**

Pray for those who will be committing themselves to membership at Sunnybrook during our upcoming October membership classes.

### **Memory Verse:**

*"Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,' he said to them."*

**Mark 14:23-24**



# Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
  - Take time to prepare.
  - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
  - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
  - What is the purpose of our group?
  - What is the vision for our group?
  - What are your expectations?
  - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
  - What are some things we value as a group?
  - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?

Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
  - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
  - Encouraging and challenging one another
  - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

# Group Agreement

## OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: \_\_\_\_\_

## OUR VALUES

**Group Attendance:** To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

**Safe Environment:** To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

**Respect Differences:** To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

**Confidentiality:** To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

**Encouragement for Growth:** To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

**Welcome for Newcomers:** To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

**Shared Ownership:** To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

**Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes:** To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

## OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes \_\_\_\_\_
- Childcare \_\_\_\_\_
- When we will meet (day of week) \_\_\_\_\_
- Where we will meet (place) \_\_\_\_\_
- We will begin at (time) \_\_\_\_\_ and end at \_\_\_\_\_
- We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
- Our primary worship service time will be \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of this agreement \_\_\_\_\_
- Date we will review this agreement again \_\_\_\_\_
- Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study \_\_\_\_\_



**SUNNYBROOK**  
community church

5601 Sunnybrook Drive  
Sioux City, Iowa 51106  
[www.sunnybrookchurch.org](http://www.sunnybrookchurch.org)